

Coptic Pope arrives in Syria for church meeting

DAMASCUS (AP) — Coptic Pope Shenouda III arrived in Syria Thursday to meet with church leaders to discuss Jerusalem, relations with Muslims and the unity of Middle Eastern churches. Pope Shenouda plans to visit Palestinian refugee camps and meet with Monsignor Michael Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, during his visit. Shenouda has banned Egypt's six million Coptic Christians from visiting Jerusalem, saying it would be a form of normalising relations with Israel. On Friday, he plans to attend meetings of the Middle East Council of Churches, which brings together the region's Orthodox, Coptic, Assyrian, Anglican, Protestant and Catholic churches. Shenouda last visited Syria in 1972.

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Pope issues message of hope to Lebanese before trip

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II on Friday called on the Lebanese to "conquer divisions" in a special message eight days before leaving for Beirut. "I entrust to the highest the courageous march of the Lebanese people on the road of national reconciliation and social reconstruction, in an ever more intense unity and cooperation," the Pope said. Strife between Lebanese Christian, Muslim and Druze groups fuelled the 15-year civil war that ended in 1990 and killed more than 150,000 people. The pontiff will spend May 10-11 in Beirut and its environs, celebrating mass, holding a prayer service with young people and meeting with political and religious leaders. In the message released Friday by the Vatican directed at Lebanon's people, the pontiff called on the Lebanese to find "the energy necessary to conquer divisions and surmount all the obstacles that present themselves."

Divided unions hold separate May Day rallies

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese workers held two separate May Day rallies Thursday, reflecting a bitter feud between a union chief critical of the government and his pro-government rival. Incumbent Union Chairman Elias Abu Rizk, who has led paralyzing strikes to protest the policies of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, has insisted that he won the April 24 election to head Lebanon's Trade Union Federation and has refused to step down. Hariri's labour ministry has certified Ghanim Zogbi, the pro-government candidate, as the winner. The dispute has torn apart the 350,000-member General Confederation of Labour Trade Unions, which remained united throughout the 1975-90 civil war. At one of Thursday's indoor rallies, Mr. Zogbi pledged to restore the confederation's unity. "Our hands are extended to everybody to cooperate for the benefit of workers," Mr. Zogbi told the rally, which was attended by cabinet ministers and thousands of workers. Opposition legislators attended a rally held by Mr. Abu Rizk, who accused the government of dividing the labour movement. That rally was attended by several hundred union members.

Eritrean Islamists report fighting with army

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Eritrean opposition Islamic Jihad Movement has stated it has engaged in fierce fighting with government troops in north Eritrea near the border with Sudan, a Sudanese newspaper reported Thursday. The movement issued a military communiqué announcing that it had inflicted heavy casualties on the army in battles last March and April on the border area, the independent Akhbar Al Yom daily said. The Islamist movement said 73 Eritrean troops were killed, while it lost 22 of its own men.



An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية والرأي

Landslide victory for British Labour after eighteen years in the 'shadow'; Major quits Conservative leadership

Financial markets cast vote for Blair

Combined agency dispatches

TONY BLAIR, Britain's first Labour Party prime minister for a generation, took up office Friday cheered by flag-waving supporters and armed with the enormous power of an unshakable parliamentary majority.

Before shepherding his three young children into the prime minister's official residence at Number 10 Downing St., Mr. Blair promised to stick to the modest tax-and-spending programme on which he made Labour electable again.

"This isn't a mandate for dogma or doctrine or a return to the past," Mr. Blair, 43, declared after being invited by Queen Elizabeth II to form a government. "It is a mandate to get those things done in this country which desperately need doing."

John Major announced he will step down as Conservative leader after the catastrophic defeat in national elections Thursday which ended his party's 18-year hold on power.

"When the curtain falls, it is time to get off the stage," Mr. Major said before going to Buckingham Palace to resign as prime minister. He then took his wife, Norma, and two adult children off to share his favourite hobby, watching cricket.

The ranks of challengers to take over the traumatised Conservatives, probably in

a July contest, was depleted by the defeats of seven of Mr. Major's cabinet ministers. The party lost half its seats overall in its worst performance since 1932.

With the trappings of office stripped from defeated British leaders within hours, Mr. Blair returned to Downing Street in Mr. Major's prime ministerial Jaguar.

Hundreds of supporters and family friends chanting "Tony, Tony, Tony" packed the short street in brilliant sunshine. Mr. Blair and his wife, Cherie, leaned over police barriers for handshakes, hugs and kisses.

The Blairs then led their children, Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11, and Kathryn, 9, through the black door marked "First Lord of the Treasury" and into the family's new home.

Mr. Blair, the youngest prime minister since 1812, is the first to have young children in Downing Street since Labour's Ramsay MacDonald in the 1920s, aides said.

In northern Ireland, the Irish Republican army-linked Sinn Féin party made an historic breakthrough by winning two of the province's 18 seats, including one for its leader Gerry Adams.

Major's predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, who moved the British political agenda right, congratulated Mr. Blair — and said he'd borrowed some Tory

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THE SMILE OF VICTORY: Labour leader Tony Blair waves as he arrives at No. 10 Downing Street, on Friday. Mr. Blair won the general election defeating the Conservative John Major in a massive landslide (Reuters photo)

Final results of British elections

PARTY	SEATS	VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Labour	419	13,541,380	43.17
Conservative	165	9,600,940	30.60
Liberal Democrats	46	5,243,440	16.71
Ulster Unionist Party	10	248,348	0.82
Scottish Nationalist Party	6	617,260	1.97
Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalists)	4	161,030	0.51
Social Democratic and Labour Party (Moderate Northern Irish Nationalist)	3	190,814	0.61
Sinn Féin (Political Wing of IRA)	2	126,921	0.40
Democratic Unionist Party	2	107,348	0.34
Independent	1	131,214	0.42
United Kingdom Unionist	1	12,817	0.04

Sandstorm arrives to Aqaba after damages in property in Egypt

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The massive sandstorm that turned the sky from gray to red, to eerie white in much of Egypt on Friday has arrived in Aqaba late Friday evening.

Captain Hisham Majali, a Jordanian vessel captain at the Seaport of Aqaba, said in a telephone conversation with the Jordan Times that "visibility is very low and most employees at the port were called in to be ready in case of emergency." He added, "most people are at home at this late hour and will not be affected by the storm unless it remains until the morning."

The sand storm will be arriving to Amman by early morning on Saturday but is expected to have lost its vigour. "The storm will mostly affect the southern and eastern parts of the Kingdom and by the time it reaches Amman and the northern parts, it is expected to have mellowed down," Mohammad Batayneh from the meteorology department told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview. "Amman may receive light showers of rain, in the early morning due to a change in pressure," Mr. Batayneh added. In Egypt, 12 people were killed and around 50 others injured on Friday when a violent sandstorm tore through northern Egypt, smashing

houses and burying debris through the desert air, police said.

Cairo International Airport closed down and incoming flights were diverted from the capital to the Red Sea coastal town of Hurgada. Heavy winds carrying the sand blew down advertising billboards at the airport, injuring several airport workers and people en route to the terminals, airport officials said. One driver suffered a cut on his chest and was taken to hospital, they said.

Excursion boats on the Nile, heavy with picnickers on the Muslim day of rest, pulled toward the shore as the winds whipped up unusual waves on the river.

Pedestrians fled into doorways and other shelters, cars stopped on the streets and office workers tried in vain to shutter their windows.

Sherif Hamad, head of the Egyptian Meteorological Service, told the Associated Press that the storm packed winds of 100 kilometres per hour.

He said it would engulf almost all of Egypt, but predicted the weather would clear Saturday.

He noted that sandstorms are not unusual at this time of the year, but he said: "We've never experienced such a powerful sandstorm."

PNA softens position before arrival of Ross

RAMALLAH (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's spokesman said Thursday that peace talks could resume even without Israel freezing its controversial housing project in Arab East Jerusalem.

The apparent softening of the Palestinian position came as Israeli and Palestinian officials said U.S. envoy Dennis Ross would return to the region early next week in a new effort to restart the peace talks.

Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said the Palestinians are willing to resume talks as long as they focused on their demands for an end to all settlement construction — including in Jerusalem — and on the scope of Israel's West Bank troop pullbacks.

The talks broke down in March, after the Palestinians rejected Israel's offer of a relatively limited pullback from West Bank rural areas — where Israel is to stage three more withdrawals — and Israel began building a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, the sector where the Palestinians want their capital.

The Palestinians had demanded a halt to the construction of the 6,500-unit project on the Jabal Abu Ghneim hilltop.

On Thursday, Mr. Kanafani eased away from that position

in a news conference in the autonomous town of Ramallah which was called to "clarify" Mr. Arafat's positions on the two-month crisis.

"We are not saying the building on Jabal Abu Ghneim must stop before there is a return to negotiations," Mr. Kanafani said. "We have diagnosed what the problems are. What is now needed is to sit down and solve them."

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself called for resuming and even speeding up the peace talks. But Israel's initial reply to Mr. Kanafani's comments was non-committal.

"If they mean it, it's a change in their position," said Mr. Netanyahu's adviser David Bar-Ilan. But he said Israel would still demand that Mr. Arafat crack down on militant groups and fully restore the security cooperation which has been scaled back.

Mr. Bar-Ilan confirmed Mr. Kanafani's announcement that Mr. Ross would return to the region, probably next Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Mr. Netanyahu faced protests Thursday from settlers who maintain he is not doing enough to support them.

In the Mitzpe Jericho settlement, Israeli soldiers and police hauled Jewish settlers

and two trailer homes off a dusty hilltop outside a West Bank settlement. Four settlers were arrested, and the trailers were loaded onto trucks and taken away.

Settler Sarah Sar-El told Israel army radio the community would challenge the removal order in court.

Police spokesman Linda Menubin said the trailers were set up illegally last week outside Mitzpe Jericho, a 150-family settlement overlooking the Palestinian city of Jericho.

In the summer of 1995, settlers regularly set up illegal trailer encampments on West Bank hilltops to protest the previous Labour government's freezing of settlement construction. They were dragged off by Israeli troops in mass confrontations that sometimes became violent.

When he was elected last year with the overwhelming support of settlers, Mr. Netanyahu said existing settlements would be allowed to expand, but settlers say he has not done enough to meet their needs.

About 70 settlers protested Thursday in front of Mr. Netanyahu's office in Jerusalem, complaining that his government has not given them the economic support they were

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Israel's Labour says relations with U.K. depend on peace

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's opposition Labour party congratulated on Friday the "friend of Israel" Tony Blair for his win in British elections, but warned the friendship could fade if the peace process crumbles. "We are happy for the victory of Blair and his party and we congratulate them. Blair and the Labour party are true friends of Israel," said Nassim Zvilli, secretary-general of Israel's Labour Party. Mr. Blair and his party "have proven the close ties which they have cultivated with the (Israeli) Labour Party over the past few years," he told the radio. But Mr. Zvilli added that Britain's Labour were "friends on certain conditions, since they will not allow the peace process to crumble." The probable new British foreign secretary in Mr. Blair's government, Robin Cook, is considered in Israel as biased towards the Palestinians and is seen to have become friendlier to the Jewish state only after the peace process began in 1993.

Jordan continues on path of 'Great Arab Revolt' — King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said in a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali "Jordan will remain true to the principles of the Great Arab Revolt and its noble mission of uniting the Arab Nation, protecting its rights and those of future generations."

His Majesty also said, in his reply to the prime minister's message of good wishes marking the 44th anniversary of assuming his constitutional powers as King of Jordan, Friday, May 2, "the Kingdom was founded on the values of Arabism and noble Islamic beliefs such as unity, freedom and respect of human rights."

"I have taken upon myself and dedicated my life to serving the nation since the moment I was honoured with assuming leadership and shouldering responsibility for the country," noted King Hussein. King Hussein assumed his constitutional power of the Kingdom on May 2, 1953 and was crowned King of Jordan on August 11 of the previous year.

"I thank God for helping me in building this country as a haven for free people and an oasis of security and stability, a home for a united Jordanian family keen on pursuing the march of democracy," added the King who thanked the prime minister and the Council of Ministers for their good wishes on this anniversary.

His Majesty received similar cables from the speakers of Parliament, heads of the armed forces, security services and the commander of the Palestinian Liberation Army in Jordan.

Australian replaces Ekeus at UNSCOM

UNITED NATIONS (R)

Australia's U.N. ambassador, Richard Butler, was appointed on Thursday as the new executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission in charge of Iraqi disarmament, the United Nations announced.

He will replace Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, who has led the U.N. Special Commission, known as UNSCOM, since its inception in 1991. Mr. Butler will take over on July 1 and Mr. Ekeus will become Sweden's ambassador to Washington.

UNSCOM is in charge of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The oil embargo and other sanctions against Iraq, imposed after it invaded Kuwait in 1990, cannot be lifted until the commission is satisfied it has accounted for all its biological, chemical and ballistic arms.

Expressing deep regret at Mr. Ekeus' resignation on behalf of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, spokesman Fred Eckhard said: "Ambassador Butler will bring to the post both personal dynamism and wide experience in diplomacy and in particular in the complex field of disarmament."

Mr. Butler, who had been recommended by Mr. Ekeus, told a news conference he was "deeply honoured" to be chosen for the post and Mr. Ekeus' record meant "he had enormous shoes to fill."

"This is one of those jobs in which you know you have succeeded when you are unemployed," he quipped to reporters.

Mr. Ekeus said it was a "professional disappointment" he could not finish the job although his commission, which diplomats consider one of the most professional in the U.N., had made great strides.

But he said it was clear Baghdad had decided to "systematically mislead, conceal and cheat," in revealing its weapons programmes. He said President Saddam Hussein wanted to keep some of arms, especially Scud missiles.

Mr. Ekeus said most of Iraq's chemical weapons had been destroyed and the U.N. had discovered parts of the biological

arms programme.

"There remains, unfortunately, quantitatively, some small but qualitatively still highly significant items unaccounted for in Iraq," he said.

The United States mission issued a statement on behalf of Ambassador Bill Richardson, currently in Zaire, saying it had "tremendous respect" for Mr. Butler's talents.

"We recognise that Ambassador Butler will face an enormous task," it said. "The commission must continue its vigorous efforts to uncover the truth."

Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Mr. Butler's appointment "is testimony to Australia's high international standing in the field of arms control."

Mr. Butler, 54, known for his articulate and blunt comments, has been involved in disarmament affairs since 1983, when he was appointed Australia's first ambassador to the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament for five years. Mr. Butler represented his country in Geneva at the same time.

Mr. Butler made world headlines in 1995 when he successfully pushed a General Assembly resolution aimed at denouncing nuclear tests by France and China.

A year later he moved quickly to save the nuclear test ban treaty by getting the General Assembly to open it for signature after Geneva arms negotiations failed because of opposition from India.

Mr. Butler came to the U.N. in 1992 after serving as ambassador in Thailand as well as his country's representative in Cambodia.

He was elected shortly afterwards to several posts by his colleagues, including chairman of the committee organising the world body's 1995 50th anniversary celebrations and president of the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

In 1995 Mr. Butler convened the Canberra commission on the elimination of nuclear weapons, which produced a landmark report. The commission included former U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara as well as Mr. Ekeus.

Lebanon truce committee says 'unintended' shell fell in Israel

NAQOURA, Lebanon (AFP) — The committee monitoring a truce accord in South Lebanon ruled Wednesday that an "unintended" guerrilla shell slammed into north Israel and that a Lebanese school bus was hit by machine-gun fire.

A statement by the five-nation panel, which ended two days of meetings at the border town of Naqoura on Wednesday, said the "unintended" guerrilla shell slammed into north Israel and that a Lebanese school bus was hit by machine-gun fire.

The monitoring group accepted as factual that mortar shells were fired by a Lebanese armed group at a position of Israeli forces at Sheikh Abdad, and that at least one shell, as an unintended result, impacted east of that position on Israeli territory, the committee statement said.

The committee — made up of France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — said the Israeli delegation considered the attack a breach of the April 26, 1996, accord and an "attempt to bypass it."

Lebanon rejected that assertion, saying that "all shells were fired at a military target, that all but one shell impacted on Lebanese territory, and that the attack was therefore consistent with the understanding."

Under the truce accord which ended Israel's "Campaign of Wrath" offensive in Lebanon last year, Israeli and Lebanese-based guerrillas are barred from targeting civilians or launching attacks from

civilian areas.

The panel was ruling on an Israeli complaint about an attack by Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas on an Israeli army base at the Lebanese-Israeli border on Friday that injured two soldiers.

Hizbollah says it attacks Israeli forces in South Lebanon in an attempt to force them to withdraw.

The committee said it has also "accepted as factual" that a school bus was hit by two machine-gun rounds.

"The Lebanese delegation asserted that the firing originated in a position of Israeli forces. The Israeli delegation rejected this claim and denied having any connection with this incident," the group said.

Lebanon lodged a complaint with the committee after the bus, packed with children, was hit by fire Sunday.

Six 12.7-mm bullets fired from a position manned by Israeli troops and allied militiamen on the Kawaba hilltop in the occupied border zone struck the bus, security sources said. Nobody was harmed but the machine-gun fire traumatised the children, aged between four and 12, who were on their way to a Hizbollah-run school.

The group said Katyusha rockets were launched by a "Lebanese armed group" towards the area of Mazraat Al Dinashkiyeh, in the South Lebanon zone which Israel says it occupies as a buffer to prevent attacks on its northern border.

The monitoring group said the Israeli delegation charged that the rockets

Hizbollah hit by desertions — Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has gained the upper hand over the Iranian-backed Hizbollah militia in South Lebanon because of a spate of desertions from the Shiite Muslim group, a senior Israeli army officer said in remarks published Thursday.

"A new situation has arisen in South Lebanon which has given us a clear superiority over Hizbollah," said Brigadier-General Eli Amitai, head of the Israeli force which controls a "security zone" inside South Lebanon.

"The Shiite fundamentalist organisation is being hit by numerous desertions and is having difficulties mobilising recruits because of the growing standard of living in Lebanon which isolates them from religion," he told the army's magazine.

Gen. Amitai said the organisation was leading fewer attacks against the "security zone" and that Israeli forces had also found more effective ways of combating the group, both militarily and on the intelligence level.

"In the last few months, the air force has changed the picture by using new and much more accurate weapons... the opposing side has understood this change very well and is being much more careful," he said.

The Israeli officer added that his troops had recently uncovered a large Hizbollah arms cache near the Litani River in southern Lebanon which included 17 Stella anti-aircraft missiles.

Hizbollah spearheads Lebanese resistance to the "security zone," which Israel set up in 1985 and occupies with the help of its proxy militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

Gen. Amitai also told Voice of the South, the SLA's radio in South Lebanon, that SLA soldiers would soon be trained to use sophisticated new weaponry, including Tow missiles and high-tech night-sights.

Hizbollah targeted the SLA in a host of attacks in April, killing four soldiers and wounding 10.

According to Lebanese press reports, the SLA has been hit by a rash of desertions in recent months.

They were launched "indiscriminately towards a civilian-populated area" while Lebanon considered that it targeted a military post manned by Israeli-allied militiamen.

It urged all parties to "abide strictly by the... understanding... and called on them to take all necessary precautions to protect civilian lives and prevent civilian populations from being affected by increased tension."

This is the ninth committee meeting this year.



CAIRO STORM: An Egyptian municipality worker clears away branches following a heavy sandstorm in Cairo which left nine dead and a dozen injured on Friday. The sandstorm reached speeds of 90 kilometres an hour, also damaged dozens of cars (AFP photo)

Lawyer jailed for article critical of Palestinian National Authority

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A rights group said Friday Palestinian authorities have detained a lawyer for writing an article noting Israel's openness in probing its political scandal — and asking pointedly if the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) could do the same.

And another human rights group said 24 political prisoners in a Palestinian jail in Jericho are being denied the right to see their lawyers and, in many cases, their families.

The lawyer was detained about five days ago in Gaza, said the Palestinian human rights monitoring group.

It said the man had sent an article to the Gaza Bar Association (GBA), to be printed in its next newsletter. In the letter, he noted that in the recent influence-peddling scandal, Israeli police had interrogated both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

and his justice minister for hours.

"When will these examples be practised under the PNA?" The article was quoted as saying by the group's director, Bassam Eid.

Mr. Eid said that when the article arrived at the GBA, a lawyer took it to the PNA's attorney general, who immediately ordered him detained on suspicion of defaming and slandering the PNA. He has not been charged yet, Mr. Eid said.

Attorney General Khalid Kidreh confirmed that the man, identified as Jamil Salameh, had been detained. But he said the man wasn't a lawyer and hadn't been detained because of an article.

"We arrested him and are investigating his case," Mr. Kidreh told the Associated Press, saying only that the case had to do with security matters.

Asked for details, he said that criticising the legal system "is a legal matter. One should go to the court, not to the media."

Mr. Eid, whose group is based in Jerusalem, said he feared that "this is becoming a policy of the Palestinian authority."

"They are not allowing people to speak out," he said. "They say that if you defame the authority, people will use this against the Palestinians."

Just last month, Amnesty International warned against the continued abuse of human rights by Palestinian security forces.

Though it said the situation had improved in recent months, it noted that 11 Palestinians have died in custody since Palestinian self-rule began in May 1994.

Mr. Kidreh has denied that systematic human rights abuses take place. "We do everything by the book," he said recently.

Meanwhile, a second human rights group, the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, said in a statement Friday that 24 political prisoners were being held in an interrogation centre in Jericho, without having been formally charged or tried.

It said they hadn't been allowed to see their lawyers, and some hadn't been allowed to see their families. It gave the example of one man, an attorney named Hossam Arafat, who had been held since Feb. 8. It said he has had only one family visit since then, and his lawyer hasn't been able to visit him in an official capacity — only as a personal visit.

Officials weren't immediately available to comment on the allegations.

Cross-border trade booms between Turkey and Iraq

HABUR, Turkey (AFP) — Turkish authorities are encouraging a boom in trade with neighbouring Iraq in a bid to revive the economy of an area shattered by Ankara's military campaign against Kurdish separatists.

Traffic through this frontier post in southeast Turkey has quadrupled since last January, much of it in fuel oil purchased in Iraq and sold across the border at half the price of the heavily-taxed "official" product.

On average some 1,300 trucks belonging to Turkish Kurds pass through Habur, carrying food for sale in areas of northern Iraq controlled by Iraqi-Kurdish parties, almost twice the number of a year ago.

The drivers bring back fuel oil in specially-mounted tanks for sale in a trade that is more tolerated by the Turkish authorities.

Ankara recently allowed the size of the tanks to be doubled to carry up to eight tonnes for heavy trucks. The only condition is that the larger tanks be made out of semi-transparent fibre-glass, to prevent them being used for the transport of arms for the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) that has been fighting Ankara's forces since 1984.

Another 300 trucks also pass through Habur every day with food as part of the United Nations "oil-for-food" arrangement approved by the Security Council's Resolution 486, allowing sanctions-hit Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil to buy food and medical supplies.

The increase in trade has led to the reopening of one of the two bridges over the River Habur that forms the border, and the frontier post is now open 24 hours a day.

The total number of trucks from Turkey's south-east regions of Mardin and Sirnak that ply this route has grown to 27,000, from 5,500 when the border crossing reopened in August 1994 after being closed for some three years since the Gulf war.

They bring 6,000 tonnes of fuel oil into Turkey a day, or around 2.2 million tonnes a year, in the other direction go some 2,000 tonnes of food a day aboard the trucks that are allowed to carry up to 1.5 tonnes each. Strictly speaking, the trade violates the embargo against Iraq, but Turkish officials say the U.N. tolerates it because it benefits the Iraqi Kurds opposed to the Baghdad regime of president Saddam Hussein.

Turkish authorities estimate that the Iraqi Kurds earn \$215,000 a day just from the "customs taxes" imposed on the vehicles, and on the oil they trans-

port.

They also make money by selling Turkish Kurds oil they have bought from the Iraqis, and from reselling the imported food to Iraqis hit by the embargo.

"Habur is the region's factory," a Turkish official said, noting that at least half-a-million people make their livings from commerce there.

A 24-year-old truck driver from Lice, in Turkey's southeast Dyabakir province, said he did the journey to Zakho, just across the border in Iraq, twice a month, earning 150 million Turkish Lira (\$1,140), well above the regional average. The two return journeys took him a total of eight or nine days, and the rest of the month, he did nothing, he said.

"Because there is nothing else to do."

Turkish court charges 18 Islamists over play

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish security court on Thursday charged 18 Islamists with inciting people to rebellion and to kill one another in a play they put on last month, state-run Anatolian news agency said.

The suspects face at least 20 years in jail if found guilty under article 149 of the Turkish penal code, the agency said.

Police earlier this week detained 21 people with a view to prosecuting on the same charges, but three of

them have since been released.

Anatolian gave no more details about the Islamist play, called "An Enemy of God," which has angered the strictly secularist army.

The powerful military has led a chorus of secularist uproar against attempts by Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to relax strict restrictions on the role of Islam in public life.

An Islamist education centre in the central province of Kayseri was closed down on Thursday

in a follow-up to police raids on illegal Islamic education centres at the weekend, the agency said.

Erbakan signed a communiqué by the powerful military-dominated National Security Council last Saturday agreeing to proceed with curbs on the role of Islam in public life.

Anatolian quoted the governor of Kayseri province, Mevlut Cetinkaya, as saying that the orders of the National Security Council were being carried out carefully.

Halting illegal Islamist education was one of the main demands of the military.

But senior parliament members in Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party have said they would seek to block any bid to restrict religious education.

Three directors of illegal Islamist education centres, which closed earlier this week in the western province of Sakarya, also went on trial on Tuesday. The charges against the directors were not clear.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35 French Programme
16:00 Culture World Sport
16:30 TVC - News
17:00 Drama - Blue Heelers
18:00 French Programme
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy - Human With A Twist
20:00 TVC - Matras
20:30 TVC - Prom
21:00 TVC - The
21:30 News in English
21:55 Information and current affairs from Dublin

PRAYER TIMES

14:27 Fair
15:51 Sunn - Dubai
12:33 Dubai
16:12 Fair
19:16 Maghrib
20:40 Fair

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweetside, Tel 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel 652785
St. Joseph Church Tel 624801
Church of the Annunciation Tel 637440
De la Salle Church Tel 661656
Terra Sancta Church Tel 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel 623341
American Church Tel 652826

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel 773131
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel 773261
St. Ephraim Church Tel 773151
Armenian International Church
Tel 773126
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel 773232
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel 773257
The Latter-Day Saints Tel 652952
Church of Nazareth Tel 652991

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel 812295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel 654946

WEATHER

Readings sampled in the Department of Meteorology.
Temperatures are expected to drop and humidity to rise with moderate weather conditions prevailing and winds northwesterly.

In Amman, rains will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, with southerly active and sea rough.

Min/Max temp. Amman 16/25

Aqaba 21/30
Deserts 14/27
Jordan Valley 20/30

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 30 Aqaba 33 Humidity readings: Amman 22 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Fayez Dabbas 759155
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 898140
Dr. Fakhri Bilel 522233
Dr. Mazen Nabil 893455
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637185
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najih pharmacy 847632
IBRID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy 1-1
Dr. Zahur Al Qadi 900606
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 657111

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111
637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 658000
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity 64428186
Aqaba:
Princess Haya Hospital 65214111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel: (08) 52300 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Aden (RJ)
09:35 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
10:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
10:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:05 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Colombo (RJ)
11:45 New Delhi (RJ)
14:20 Istanbul (add) (RJ)
15:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Greek Catholic Hospital 6272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital 62247106
Aqaba:
Princess Haya Hospital 65214111

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10:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:05 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Colombo (RJ)
11:45 New Delhi (RJ)
14:20 Istanbul (add) (RJ)
15:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:20 Cairo (RJ)
19:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
19:10 London, Berlin (RJ)
23:59 Paris (RJ)
00:10 Madrid (add) (RJ)
00:35 Larnaca (RJ)
01:00 Paris (RJ)
06:00 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights

06:10 Jakarta (GA)
07:05 London, Damascus (BA)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
13:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:10 London (GA)
21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)
23:25 Beirut (ME)
23:45 Amsterdam (KL)
01:00 Cairo (MS)
03:00 Rome (AZ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:30 Beirut (RJ)
09:00 Istanbul (add) (RJ)
12:05 Vienna (RJ)
12:35 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 Paris (RJ)
12:45 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
13:00 Madrid (RJ)
13:00 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)

13:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
14:00 London (RJ)
20:25 Dubai, Bangkok (add) (RJ)
21:50 Bombay (RJ)
21:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
21:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:20 Larnaca (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:59 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
01:00 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
02:00 Malaga (add) (RJ)
04:00 Jeddah (RJ)

Other Flights

04:00 Rome (AZ)
06:50 Larnaca (CY)
07:10 London (GA)
08:10 Damascus, London (BA)
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:30 Riyadh (SV)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
20:15 Dubai (EK)
21:10 Jakarta (GA)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:25 Amsterdam (KL)
02:00 Cairo (MS)
04:00 Athens (OA)
07:00 Beirut (ME)

HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 9:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 6:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 8:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 6:00 p.m. every Sunday

Home News

Crown Prince calls for emphasis of Jordan's positive image abroad

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan has called for the proper utilisation of the positive image of Jordan abroad, through diplomatic channels and other endeavours within a comprehensive political, economic and cultural perspective.

In a lecture at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, Prince Hassan emphasised the importance of Jordanian diplomacy in pursuing the Kingdom's international efforts, designed to promote regional and inter-regional cooperation within humanitarian, cultural and economic frameworks and to enhance cooperation

with different global blocs. Jordan's initialing of a partnership agreement with the European Union (EU) of late, the Crown Prince said, reflected the Kingdom's desire to enhance regional cooperation.

In 1970, Jordan was first recognised as a Middle Eastern nation with influence on regional events, he added.

In his lecture, the Crown Prince emphasised the importance of concentrating Jordanian diplomatic efforts on highlighting the country's democratic policies, its central location and the competence of its human resources.

There is need to identify both challenges and future prospects, Prince Hassan asserted, national interests are not managed by embassies but rather by central governments.

He reaffirmed the importance of Arab cooperation in cultural, economic and security fields.

Referring to the 21st century as a global era, Prince Hassan stated that the assertion of the presence and influence of Arab nations must be key for this epoch.

He encouraged Jordan's relations with other Arab countries in all areas of common concern.

Jordan has need for continued alliances with the global community, the Crown Prince stated.

The Kingdom must take advantage of next year's international conference, to be held in Amman, to back the International Parliamentary Union's call on world nations to reject all forms of discrimination directed towards Islam.

The lecture was attended by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh.

Prince Hassan toured the institute and was briefed by Jordan Institute of Diplomacy President Mazen Armouti on different activities held within.

Peace Corps volunteers look forward to serving Jordan

Volunteer work focuses on women, rural improvement

By William Amin
USIA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — An unprecedented development will occur in Jordanian-American relations as the first Peace Corps volunteers arrive in Amman this week to serve the Hashemite Kingdom for at least two years.

Labelled as "Jordan One," the volunteers left the American capital for their new destination just hours after First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted special ceremonies at the White House on Wednesday, April 30.

Expressing her personal appreciation for the volunteers' mission, as well as America's positive feelings toward Jordan's desire for self-development, Ms. Clinton said the Peace Corps volunteers symbolise Jordanian-American "friendship and partnership."

In remarks to her audience, including senior officials and members of Congress who had been Peace Corps volunteers, Ms. Clinton noted that the launching of the Peace Corps programme in Jordan received approval at the highest levels in that country with both His Majesty King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Noor being "personally very supportive."

Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, who was herself a Peace Corps volunteer in 1962, also spoke at the ceremonies and described her experience as a way to learn about herself and the world.

Representing the volunteers on the platform was Michel Lefebvre. Both Lefebvre and another volunteer, Roger Maggard, planned to be Peace Corps volunteers even before getting married in 1995. "Jordan One" is their dream come true. In her remarks, Lefebvre expressed her appreciation of the first lady's keen interest in promoting women's and children's causes, exemplified by her best-selling book, "It Takes a Village."

The group of 22 women and seven men, including three couples other than Maggard and Lefebvre, will devote most of their activities to development of rural and Bedouin communities where women can learn to create simple income-generating crafts and to promote and sell their products. Part of the volunteers' attention will focus on eco-tourism projects in Jordan's new national parks.

Upon their arrival, the Peace Corps volunteers will go through a three-month training period in which they can familiarise themselves with Jordan's rich history as well as its present-day concerns and aspirations. The training will also include learning the basics of the Arabic language and becoming acquainted with Jordan's social traditions.

Once the training is completed, the volunteers will launch into their projects and pursue their defined tasks in close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, other government agencies, and the Queen Noor and Queen Alia private foundations, known for their active involvement in social and economic development.

Jordan first expressed interest in hosting Peace Corps volunteers in October 1996 and an agreement was formalised with the Jordanian government a few weeks later. The selection process was soon begun at the Peace Corps' Washington, D.C. headquarters with preference given to married couples and those who had previously served in rural communities in the developing world.

Since it was established by President F. Kennedy 36 years ago, the Peace Corps has sent more than 148,000 volunteers to serve various countries around the globe, including eight in the Arab World and a number of Muslim nations. Jordan becomes the ninth Arab country and the world's 132nd to host a current total of about 65,000 Peace Corps volunteers.

The White House ceremonies before the volunteers departed for Jordan came coincidentally as "America's Future," a three-day summit on volunteerism, was winding up in the city of Philadelphia, home of the Liberty Bell. That summit featured bipartisan calls by President Clinton, former presidents Carter and Bush, former First Lady Nancy Reagan, and former Chief of Staff Colin Powell urging Americans to make volunteerism a national priority.

In his speech, President Clinton cited the Peace Corps as an example of volunteerism.

It was natural for Ms. Clinton to host this send-off for the

first group of volunteers to Jordan. The Peace Corps had especially caught the First Lady's attention during her trips around the world where she met volunteers first-hand and had an opportunity to observe the degree of dedication they feel toward their host countries and their work.

Most of "Jordan One" members are in their 20's. Yet they vary widely in terms of their educational backgrounds, experiences and expectations. Brian Kuhn, a health education specialist who previously served two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco and helped conduct a faunal survey in the Eastern High Atlas Mountains, contrasts sharply with Holly Elwell, a sociology major from Kansas City, Missouri, who has never left the United States.

Close to Kuhn, who already has a mastery of Arabic, is Anne Austin, who lived with her parents for 10 years in Saudi Arabia and thus "grew up" aware of women's issues. That familiarity, she told the Washington File, was reinforced by further study of Islamic and Arab cultures, which she gained while earning a degree in psychology from Emory University. Austin feels it will be "easy for me to adapt" to the Jordanian environment.

Monica Whalen, daughter of a strong feminist advocate in California, said she learned from her mother the importance of being "politically active," of serving as a "resource" for village women in Jordan, and "somehow making a difference" for them.

Young married couples seem to be unconcerned about the possibility that they may have to work separately in Jordan. Roger Maggard's background is in economic development, while his wife Michelle Lefebvre's specialisation is community development. Working together or not, they both hope that their presence in Jordan will be an opportunity to learn as well as to teach. Lefebvre, moreover, counts on establishing "reciprocal relationships" between the two communities where she and her husband will be working and "sharing resources and ideas with them."

Marguerite Lane represents a relatively rare breed of Peace Corps volunteer, one who has already had a full career but is still ready to go on to a new challenge. The 67-year-old businesswoman from Oregon, who owned a graphic design and advertising firm, is looking forward to working with rural women on creative projects — a new experience that "all my grandchildren are excited about."

When interviewed, Lane spoke of the need to involve the groups she will be working with in all phases of planning and implementation, saying the significance of one's lies not in what is being done but in how goals are achieved.

In a statement released at a ceremony celebrating the departure of the first Peace Corps Volunteers to serve in Jordan, U.S. President Bill Clinton stated, "This occasion marks a historic step in the development of closer relations between the people of the United States and the people of Jordan."

The following is U.S. President Bill Clinton's statement to Peace Corps volunteers to Jordan:

Warm greetings to everyone gathered at the White House to celebrate the departure of the first Peace Corps Volunteers to serve in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

This occasion marks a historic step in the development of closer relations between the people of the United States and the people of Jordan. I am proud that Peace Corps Volunteers will have the opportunity to serve in this extraordinary country and to learn more about its rich history and proud culture. By living and working with Jordanians, they will strengthen the ties of friendship between our two peoples and help Jordan build a better future.

As these outstanding men and women embark on their mission of goodwill and progress to Jordan, we are reminded of the enormous contributions volunteers make in the lives of people around the world and in the United States when they return.

They have brought great honour to our country through their service to others, and their spirit of commitment is a lasting source of pride for all Americans.

I salute each of the volunteers and wish them every success.

Majali slated to visit Qatar

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali is scheduled to visit Qatar Saturday where he will discuss bilateral relations and methods of stimulating the peace process.

In a statement to the Qatari daily newspaper Al Watan, previous to his visit, Dr. Majali maintained "intensive regional political activity obliges us to remain in continuous contact to exchange views, and form a united stand in regards to regional developments."

He described his visit to Qatar as further enhancing brotherly relations between the two countries.

Dr. Majali voiced hope that obstacles to the Middle East peace process would be removed and that the peace process would be re-activated.

In a statement to Al Watan, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi also said that Dr. Majali's visit falls within the framework of ongoing bilateral consultation on issues of common concern.

including the peace process.

During his visit, the first to a foreign country since he assumed office on March 19, Dr. Majali is slated to meet with senior Qatari officials, including Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah, Crown Prince Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad and Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ben Khalifah.

The visit comes amidst the Kingdom's efforts to improve ties with Gulf states, strained during the 1990-91 Gulf War due to Jordan's perceived tilt towards Iraq during the seven-month crisis.

Jordanian relations with the majority of Gulf states have improved since that time, but Kuwait has rejected all mediation to repair ties with the Kingdom.

Last February, the Qatari crown prince visited Jordan in his first trip abroad since having been appointed by his father in 1996.

"We will also discuss Jordanian labour in Qatar, joint investments between the two countries and energy projects," Dr. Mutawi said.

The Jordanian delegation

accompanying Dr. Majali will include Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Horani, Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh, Head of Arab Affairs at the Lower House Fawzi Tu'eimeh, Senator Jawdat Sbouh and Dr. Mutawi.

"The size and quality of the delegation clearly reflects the subjects which we will discuss with the Qatari side," Mr. Mutawi said in an interview with the Jordan Times.

Dr. Majali will visit other Gulf nations in the near future, but the date of these projected visits has not yet been decided, he added.

Among the issues the two countries are slated to discuss is that of Jordanian prisoners who are still detained in Kuwait for alleged collaboration with Iraq during the Gulf War.

Last February, Kuwait released ten prisoners as a result of Qatari and Omani mediation.

Earlier this month, a delegation of prisoners' families met with the Qatari ambassador in Amman and requested Qatari mediation to release their kin in

Kuwait.

The volume of trade between Jordan and Qatar reached around 18 million dinars in 1996 as compared to 12 million dinars for the previous year.

Jordanian exports to Qatar last year totalled 13.1 million dinars as compared to 4.3 million in 1995 and were mostly composed of fruits and vegetables.

Qatari exports to Jordan in 1996 reached 4.3 million dinars as compared to 3.9 million dinars for the previous year.

Qatar, which allowed Israel to open its second interest section in the Arab World in 1995, froze relations with Tel Aviv and halted all political and economic contacts with Israel following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to build a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Qatar has said that ties with the Jewish state will not return to normal as long as it continues its settlement policy and delays implementation of previously signed agreements with the Palestinians.

JWA elections score victory for opponents of normalisation

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Friday's Jordan Writers Association (JWA) elections brought seven anti-normalisation candidates to the association's 10-member board of directors.

Novelist and former deputy in the 1989 11th legislature Fakhri Kassar just clinched the JWA presidency against outgoing president Ibrahim Absi with 67 votes to 64.

The anti-normalisation camp, known as the "Jerusalem List," fielded 10 candidates in the elections for the new board and scored a neat victory.

The seven "Jerusalem List" winners are: Bassel Rafa'i-ah, Zuheir Abu Saibeh, Ali Amri, Yousef Domra, Abdul Jabbar Abu Gharabeh, Muwaffaq Mahadin, and Hisham Ghassib.

The other three newly-elected board members are: Mohammed Kharroub, Rauda Houdou, and Rashid Issa.

In addition to Mr. Kassar and Mr. Absi, Hashim Gharaibeh and Abdullah Radwan ran unsuccessfully for a post, obtaining 51 and 26 votes respectively.

A total of only 213 of the 408 JWA members cast their votes. Some observers blamed the relatively low turnout on criticisms by some members that the JWA is putting political involvement ahead of the writers' interests.

"Some members have accused the association of working more for politics than for the writers' well-being," commented Mr. Rafa'i-ah, a newly elected member of the JWA board and a journalist at the Arabic daily, Al Ra'i.

"The elections were dominated by the division between the pro-peace and the anti-peace parties," he said.

It was Mr. Absi's stand in favour of the 1993 Palestinian-Israeli Oslo Accords and the normalisation of Jordanian-Israeli ties which lost support for him, Mr. Rafa'i-ah commented.

Mr. Kassar, who is also President of the Union of Arab Writers, described the election campaign as a "competition between those in support of the Wadi Araba and Oslo treaties and those opposing them."

"In the end, those against normalisation won," Mr. Kassar told the Jordan Times.

Expressing his satisfaction for the victory of the "Jerusalem List," Mr. Kassar said: "I consider it my list."

Besides opposition to normalising ties with the Jewish state, the "Jerusalem List" included among its priorities "the improvement of the writers' living standards, the enhancement of freedom of speech and the protection of freedom of the press," Mr. Rafa'i-ah told the Jordan Times.

Japanese-Jordanian fertiliser company inaugurated today

AQABA (J.T.) — The Nippon Jordan Fertiliser Company (NJFC), built in Aqaba by the Japanese Nippon company, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the Arab Potash Company (APC) will be formally inaugurated today under Royal patronage.

NJFC Assistant General Manager Mohammad Karaki announced Friday that the company, which cost \$84 million to construct, possesses an annual production capacity of 300,000 tonnes of compound fertilisers.

The entire output will be exported to Japan and the great share will be mandated to the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations in Japan as a central point to apportion to other companies there.

The annual consumption of compound fertilisers by the federation's members is several times the projected production of the Nippon Jordan Fertiliser Company, according to Japanese officials.

This translates into a large scope of expansion at the Aqaba plant, they stated.

The Nippon firm has custom built a 3,700-tonne vessel to transport the fertiliser to Japan and will begin to load the ship by June 15, according to Mr. Karaki.

He described the project as the brainchild of HRH Crown Prince Hassan upon his visit to Japan in 1988.

At that time, four Japanese firms expressed interest in the project and in collaborating with the JPMC and APC.

Work on the project was completed in January of last year, according to Mr. Karaki, and experimental production started the following May.

Under the provisions of the contract, the APC and JPMC hold a 20 per cent equity of the project each with the rest owned by the Japanese group.

Prime minister meets with Japanese official

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Japanese Parliament Ichiro Izawa Friday reviewed the latest developments of the Middle East peace process and obstacles facing its resumption.

Dr. Majali emphasised that peace is the only option and that war and tension should be the exception rather than the standard.

The prime minister reaffirmed the Kingdom's unwavering support for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, by which all parties would gain their legitimate rights.

Dr. Majali and the Japanese official reviewed investment opportunities in Jordan.

The world is called upon to support countries working for the actualisation of regional peace as every country in the world is impacted by the establishment of peace, the premier stated.

Dr. Majali lauded Japanese support for Jordan, particularly in the economic field and voiced his hope that bilateral cooperation would be further enhanced in the future.

Mr. Izawa praised the Jordanian role in establishing a just and lasting peace.

Japan will increase assistance to Jordan and prioritise the Kingdom, among recipient countries, in appreciation of its role, credibility and continual support for the Middle East peace process, he said.

The Japanese official described his country as willing to launch investment projects in Jordan in view of its economic stability and opportune investment climate.

The Japanese government will soon commence a study to finance the construction of a dam in the Mujib valley, he affirmed.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Majali extended an invitation to the Japanese prime minister to visit the Kingdom.

On Thursday, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayez Tarawneh and Minister of Water and Irrigation and Acting Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Munther Haddadin received Mr. Izawa and the two reviewed bilateral cooperation, in addition to the latest developments of the Middle East peace process.

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

*The Restoration of the Umayyad Palace in Amman" by Mr. Ignacio Arce at the Cervantes Institute, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Bani Hamida spring exhibition entitled "Crossing Borders" (displaying rugs, cushions, runners, and wallhang-

ings) at the Jordan Contractors Association's Building, Deir Al Ghubar (Tel. 658696), until May 18.

*Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.

*Exhibition by the San Francisco-based Palestinian-American architectural photographer Said Hisham Nuscihah entitled "The Farthest Mosque," at Darat Al Fudun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 8. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince to address press conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and President of the Arab Ophthalmological Council Akef Mughrabi will today co-chair a press conference at the Regency Palace hotel. They are slated to brief media representatives regarding preparations for the Fourth International Ophthalmological Conference to be held under Royal patronage here Monday. Prince Ra'd is the honorary president of the conference. Participants will discuss 600 reports on current medical advances in the field of ophthalmology. Approximately 1,000 ophthalmologists and eye surgeons from different parts of the world will be attending the conference.

Minister to leave for Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism Agel Biltaji and accompanying delegation will Sunday leave for Cairo on a three-day official visit to Egypt for talks with his Egyptian counterpart on tourism cooperation and the implementation of a tourism agreement and executive programme, signed by both countries. The two officials will also discuss preparations for the Council of Arab Tourism ministers to be held in Cairo next month. The Jordanian delegation will study the Egyptian experience in the fields of marketing and training as regards tourism.

U.K.'s new MPs — a younger and more feminine parliament

LONDON (AFP) — Labour's unprecedented victory in the British general election will create a House of Commons which is more youthful, feminine, and more openly sexually and religiously diverse than ever.

With 102 MPs retiring and a further 15 failing to be re-elected for candidacy by their local parties, the 659-member House of Commons will have its largest injection of fresh blood since 1945.

Labour's crushing majority will ensure that the number of women in parliament will rise from 63 to around 120, the first time it has ever topped 100. The party adopted a policy of women-only candidate lists in a quarter of all seats.

The result should prompt some long-overdue changes

in the House, which has 11 bars and a rifle range but no nursery and few female rest rooms.

The influx of youth should be just as noticeable. In contrast to many retiring MPs, the average MP will now be just a little older than the Prime Minister Tony Blair, 43: the average age of the Conservative candidates was 45, and of the Labour candidates 47.

Labour MP and solicitor Claire Ward, who at 24 becomes the youngest member of the new parliament, said she was "pleased there will be a real mix of MPs, with more women and younger members of parliament."

The election also finds a series of other firsts for the new parliament: it will contain the first Muslim MP (Mohammad Sarwar, Go-

van), the first MP to declare himself gay before being elected (Ben Bradshaw, Exeter), the first sisters (twins) in the same parliament (Angela and Maria Eagle, 36), the first blind cabinet minister (David Blunkett, education secretary), and the first physically handicapped MP (Anne Begg in Aberdeen).

EX-BBC war correspondent Martin Bell, the anti-corruption candidate who beat former government minister Neil Hamilton — at the centre of the "cash-for-questions" scandal — in what was the country's fifth safest Tory seat, becomes the first independent MP for 50 years.

For the one term he has vowed to sit, however, Mr. Bell faces a problem of where to sit, as the Commons contains no "cross-

benches" for the benefit of members not affiliated to any party.

"I've thought of alternate parking on one side and then the other," said Mr. Bell. "It's a real problem."

Finally, the size of the Labour win should mean that more old-style socialist Labour MPs will remain in parliament than expected, and perhaps wanted, by the Labour leadership.

Mr. Blair's entourage worked on the assumption of a majority of around 50 to 70, analysts said, and had ensured that with this size of vote, the MPs likely to be elected were all hand-picked "new Labour" Blairites.

The substantially higher vote recorded, analysts agreed before the poll, should mean many less carefully vetted Labour MPs would enter parliament.

India to take up Taliban threat to Buddha statues

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India pledged Friday to take up with world leaders the reported threat to two ancient Buddha statues from the radical Taliban militia in central Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral told parliament that India was concerned about the threat and would discuss "the matter with world leaders to protect the statues."

"The statues were a rare piece of world heritage and should be protected at any cost," the prime minister said.

Mr. Gujral made the comments after a Hindu nationalist, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, raised the issue in parliament.

The statues are located close to Bamian province, the base of the Hezb-e-Wahdat faction representing Afghanistan's Shiite Muslim community.

International concern over the relics was triggered after a Taliban commander last month warned they would be razed if the militia broke through Shiite lines and entered Bamian.

The Taliban top leadership later said the Buddha statues would not be destroyed. The militia's founder, Mullah Mohammad Omar, also said no country should express concern about the fate of the carvings.

The historical site has one 55-metre high statue and a slightly smaller carving 38 metres high as well as a maze of tunnels and caves with other Buddhist artifacts.

The 3rd to 4th century construction is hailed by

scholars as Afghanistan's most impressive archaeological treasure.

India does not recognise the Taliban regime in Kabul.

Meanwhile, the supreme leader of the Taliban has blamed disunity among Afghanistan's opposition parties for the destruction of the nation since the fall of the Communists.

In an interview published in the Taliban-controlled Shariat weekly newspaper Wednesday, Mr. Omar said parties founded on the basis of ethnic and linguistic differences had no room in Islam.

"Political parties have been established on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, regional, and other mistaken prejudices they cause dissension and hostility in the country,"

"Such disunifying parties have no room in Islam. All Muslims are brothers and have equal rights and responsibilities before the law," the newspaper quoted Mr. Omar as saying.

"The result of the number of, and splits between, the parties that fought the Communists, has been further destruction and fighting between Muslims after the Communists were defeated," he said.

"If there had been one rank and one plan from the beginning, this destruction would not have happened."

The loose coalition of parties which in 1992 took over the Communists fell apart soon after the victory. Civil war that followed in 1993 killed tens of thousands.

The Taliban, who cap-

tured the Afghan capital Kabul last September, accuse the opposition groups of catering primarily to three of Afghanistan's most significant ethnic minorities: The Uzbeks, the Tajiks, and the Hazaras.

The opposition accuses the Taliban of being the party of Pashtuns, Afghanistan's ethnic majority.

Since the fall of the Communists, who had ruled since 1978, there has been a gradual slide towards the parties becoming more ethnically homogeneous, although they all include members of other ethnic groups.

The frontlines between the different groups generally fall roughly along ethnic lines.

In the Shariat weekly interview, Mr. Omar said the Taliban would soon defeat the opposition.

"We assure the Muslims in areas under the control of the militias (the opposition), that since you are expecting and looking forward to our arrival, we will reach you soon and save you from the oppression of the militias," he is quoted as saying.

"My advice to you is to persuade your sons and friends to distance themselves from the militias," he said.

Mr. Omar repeated an offer of amnesty to opposition fighters. "I say to the militias that it is still not too late to take advantage of the offer of amnesty and to stop killing their countrymen. If they do not repent, then they will be responsible for what happens to them in the future," he said.

The Taliban, who cap-

Azerbaijan might consider Armenia pipeline

BAKU (R) — Azerbaijan's president Heydar Aliyev said Thursday he was prepared to consider building an oil pipeline through Armenia if Yerevan agreed to the return of Azeri territory captured during fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia has so far ruled out a deal involving territory for a pipeline, which could win it big transiting fees for taking millions of tonnes of Azeri oil to world markets.

Mr. Aliyev had also rejected the involvement of a pipeline in a peace settlement over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, but when asked about it Thursday at a briefing for foreign journalists in Baku he said: "Such a variant could be considered."

No comment was immediately available from Yerevan.

More than 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory, including Karabakh, is now controlled by separatist forces after a protracted territorial dispute over the enclave, located in Azerbaijan but predominantly populated by Armenians.

Baku says this amounts to occupation of its territory by Armenia proper.

But Armenia says it was not a formal party in the conflict between Azerbaijan and Karabakh, although it gave its ethnic kin strong moral and military support and Karabakh leader Robert Kocharyan is now the Armenian prime minister.

A 1994 ceasefire ended the protracted territorial dispute, which began when Nagorno-Karabakh broke away in the late 1980s. But a political settlement to the conflict, which killed thousands of people, is still a long way off.

Two weeks of sporadic and violent clashes earlier this month, in which the two countries traded accusations of cross-border attacks, underlined the fragility of the peace.

If a pipeline were to be built, it would probably be funded by a 13-member international consortium led by British Petroleum Plc and Norway's Statoil Den Norske State Oljeselskap as (Statoil).

The consortium signed an \$8 billion deal with Azeri government in 1994 to develop three offshore fields and first crude oil from the project is scheduled to come on stream later this year.

The consortium, the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), plans to use two existing pipelines to get early oil to black sea outlets but the pipelines do not have the capacity to handle later peak production from the project.



German policemen arrest an unidentified right-wing activist in Aschaffenburg near Frankfurt Thursday. Thousands of police were on duty throughout Germany to stop violence between left-wing and right-wing demonstrators which have often ended in clashes during Labour Day rallies (Reuters photo)

Left-wingers rampage through Berlin on May Day

BERLIN (R) — Masked demonstrators hurled stones, bottles and beer cans at Berlin police and set fire to two buildings' huts, as violence by right-wing and left-wing extremists marred May Day rallies across Germany.

Police tried to break up the clashes with batons and water cannon. The trouble followed a demonstration by around 6,500 left-wing extremists in the city and came after hundreds of neo-Nazis rampaged through the northern town of Muenchen.

The Berlin left-wingers built barricades out of rubbish bins and vehicles and tore up paving stones to throw at the police in the Prenzlauer Berg area, a focus for May Day protests since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Violence also spread to

the western Kreuzberg area of Berlin Thursday, where protesters, many with punk hairstyles and wearing leather jackets, turned over bottle recycling containers and picked out cobble stones to use as missiles.

"The potential for violence is extremely high," Berlin Interior Minister Joerg Schoenbohn told Berlin Radio, but Mr. Schoenbohn praised the police for managing to contain trouble.

Berlin police said nobody had been injured in the clashes, but said they had detained 150 people. They said around 4,000 officers were on the streets and they had the situation under control by the early evening.

Earlier, hundreds of neo-Nazis and dozens of left-wingers smashed windows and rampaged through the

tourist resort of Muenchen after police broke up an unauthorised right-wing rally.

Police there said they had detained 150 people in the town and one police officer had been hurt by a flying bottle.

In the eastern city of Leipzig, left-wing extremists hurled rocks and fireworks at police who were trying to keep them apart from a small group of skinheads defying a ban on a rally there. Police detained around 200 people after the clashes.

Thousands of police were on duty in Leipzig and Berlin bracing for such violence, as May Day rallies have often ended in clashes with police.

Over 100,000 protesters rallied across the country to protest against record

unemployment and an accompanying rise in right-wing extremism.

A clergyman who played a central role in the uprising of Leipzig against the former Communist rule in East Germany pleaded for peaceful solutions to the difficulties facing post-1990 unified Germany.

"Conflict, hate and violence threaten our lives," Pastor Christian Fuehrer told a crowded prayer meeting in the Nikolaikirche, the 12th century church which was the focus of famous "Monday demonstrations" of East Germans in 1989.

"The young are dissatisfied with their lives in our country... in their disappointment they are open to dangerous words, the ideology of violence and the grand promises of charlatans," Pastor Fuehrer said.

Diseases of affluence hit poor countries — report

LONDON (R) — "Diseases of affluence" such as heart disease and strokes are killing more people in the developing world than in richer countries, according to a report published Friday.

Such diseases also kill more people in poorer countries than infections like malaria, said the report, summarised in an article for the Lancet medical journal.

Dr. Christopher Murray of the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies and Alan Lopez of the World Health Organisation (WHO) were commissioned by the World Bank to investigate the causes of death worldwide.

Their startling findings are that heart disease — mostly heart attacks — and strokes kill more people everywhere than anything else.

Measles and traffic accidents kill more people than war, and more than half of

all female suicides in the world happen in China.

"The leading causes of death in 1990 were Ischaemic heart disease (6.3 million deaths), Cerebrovascular accidents (4.4 million deaths), lower respiratory infections (4.3 million), diarrhoeal diseases (2.9 million) and perinatal disorders (2.4 million)," they wrote.

"One death in 10 was from an injury," they added.

One surprising finding, they said, was that heart disease and stroke were such big causes of death in the developing world. Most people thought "diseases of affluence" caused by high-fat, high-sugar diets and lack of exercise would be restricted to "better-off" populations.

But in cancer deaths this was untrue. About 2.4 million of the six million cancer deaths were in industrialised countries and Eastern

Europe.

"By 1990, therefore, there were already 50 per cent more cancer deaths in less-developed countries than in developed countries," the authors wrote.

Among women aged 15 to 44, complications from pregnancy and childbirth were the biggest cause of death, while tuberculosis killed 10 per cent.

"In China, suicide is estimated to be the cause of almost one in four deaths for this age-group," Women in India had an inordinate risk of death from burns, they added.

In an editorial the Lancet said many of the top 10 causes of the 50.5 million deaths in 1990 could have been prevented.

"Four of this 10 — Ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer — may be partly prevented by

political determination to discourage tobacco smoking, by correcting industrial pollution and unbalanced diets and by discouraging sloth," it said.

"The 'real surprises' were that suicides outnumbered AIDS deaths and that drowning killed more people than war."

"It is worth pondering on how much more money is spent on research into HIV infection than into the causes of suicide or prevention of road-traffic accidents and why this should be."

Dr. Lopez and Dr. Murray made clear the research did not reflect the opinions of WHO — a disclaimer the Lancet said WHO insisted upon. "This timid response is unacceptable," it said, adding that WHO should instead sponsor debate about health priorities.

Corruption scandal deepens in India as tainted minister refuses to go

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A corruption scandal threatening to undermine India's new government worsened here Friday as a key figure in the coalition refused to resign despite mounting allegations against him.

Newspapers Friday said Laloo Prasad Yadav, chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar, was refusing to go despite calls from opposition parties for him to be sacked.

"Come what may, I am firm on my decision. The question of my resigning is ruled out," the Business Standard quoted Mr. Yadav as saying late Thursday in Patna, the Bihar capital.

Mr. Yadav, a prominent leader of the multi-party United Front Coalition which formed a government in New Delhi on April 21, has been linked to a \$271-million swindle along with 54 other politicians and officials in Bihar.

The money disappeared from a state government fund set up to buy cattle feed.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, meanwhile, rocked by the scandal just a week after his government

was sworn in on April 28, has failed to say what action he will take over Mr. Yadav.

His failure to take firm action, despite his repeated pledge to root out corruption, has undermined the rifts in his fledgling administration and fuelled opposition demands for immediate action.

Hindu nationalist leader Lal Krishna Advani said that Mr. Gujral should sack Mr. Yadav if he did not go on his own.

He added New Delhi should take over the running of Bihar, reputedly India's most lawless state.

"The (Bihar) chief minister is talking of a bloodbath if he is sacked," said Mr. Advani, president of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party).

"This is grounds enough for his dismissal."

He added any wavering by Mr. Gujral "in sacking him is bound to damage the credibility of the central government."

The Yadav affair has created a dangerous rift within the Front, with both the Socialist Party and Communists seeking his removal.

The Front Thursday celebrated the return to the government of former Finance Minister Pannabhai Chidambaram after a short boycott of the Gujral administration, but the Yadav affair is threatening to cut these celebrations short.

In Bihar itself, large numbers of Yadav's Janata Dal (People's Party) legislators have rallied against the chief minister. The Janata Dal has ruled Bihar since 1990.

The Hindu nationalists have called a general strike in Bihar Saturday to put pressure on Mr. Yadav to quit. Authorities said thousands of police would be deployed in the state to prevent clashes during the shutdown.

Mr. Yadav has denied the allegations and said he was being framed.

A wily politician, Mr. Yadav was one of the key political players who helped Mr. Gujral to become the country's prime minister after the fall of the previous United Front government last month.

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Albright, Primakov 'achieve progress' over NATO

MOSCOW (AFP) — Some progress was achieved during talks between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov aimed at bridging the gap over NATO enlargement, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman told IJAR-TASS news agency Friday.

Spokesman Gennady Tarasov was speaking after more than two hours of unscheduled talks between Mrs. Albright and Mr. Primakov Friday. He did not specify the areas in which progress was made.

Mrs. Albright later left Moscow for Washington, without making any immediate statement.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Washington was "very satisfied" with the progress of the talks, but he did not elaborate.

After a two-hour meeting Thursday, Mrs. Albright and Mr. Primakov said they hoped a charter defining future relations between Moscow and the Western alliance could

be signed on May 27, but cautioned that more work was needed on the details.

Intensive negotiations are now under way between the 16-member Western alliance and Moscow to finalise the charter before a key NATO summit in Madrid in early July, when the alliance is due to offer membership to some ex-Soviet Bloc countries in Eastern Europe.

Russia has demanded firm guarantees that NATO will not deploy nuclear weapons or expand its infrastructure on the territory of new alliance members.

NATO has insisted that it has no such plans, but has refused any binding commitment.

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are tipped as the frontrunners for membership. The first members will join in 1999, the 50th anniversary of the alliance.

China abolishes free higher education

BEIJING (AFP) — China will dismantle one of the pillars of its socialist education system later this year when its remaining tuition-free universities and colleges are allowed to charge students, reports here said Friday.

Students will have to pay tuition fees of 1,500 yuan (\$180) a year, the official China Daily quoted a spokesman for the State Education Commission as saying.

Universities will be able to slightly adjust the fee with the approval of local educational administrators, the spokesman said.

More than 600 of China's 1,032 colleges and universities stopped providing free education last year, after a pilot scheme launched in 1994, and only 368 colleges and universities still charge students.

Tuition fees were introduced in an effort to improve academic efficiency

and ease pressure on state coffers, the commission spokesman said.

He added the government would continue to offer loans, subsidies and work for study schemes to students unable to meet academic costs.

"About 20 per cent of China's three million college students come from financially disadvantaged families, with an average monthly income below 200 yuan (\$24)."

Special scholarships will be offered to students to study geology and agriculture, sectors which currently form a lack of talent, the paper said.

Free higher education was used for decades by China's socialist planners to direct graduates into jobs chosen for them by the state. Graduates have been allowed to choose their own careers since 1994.

Indian actress gets police all clear over 'nude photo' storm

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Leading Indian film actress Pooja Bhatt has been totally exonerated by police after a magazine cover purported to display her in the nude, newspapers said Friday.

Bombay Police Joint Commissioner R.S. Sharma was quoted as saying that they were convinced that Bhatt had not posed for the photograph and her face had been superimposed on somebody else's half-naked body.

"We questioned her and came to the conclusion that the photo was not Pooja's but a computer generated image," the Pioneer quoted Mr. Sharma as saying Thursday in Bombay.

The Pioneer added: "Pooja walked away (from the police headquarters) a relaxed person after the police assured her she was not guilty, but a victim of dirty mischief."

The controversial picture, which appeared to show Pooja Bhatt reclining by a pool, was published by the mass circulation Stardust magazine.

The cover read: "Sho-

cking scoop. Actresses caught nude in the net." It triggered noisy demonstrations by Hindu nationalist women's groups outside Bhatt's Bombay house. The women burnt several copies of Stardust and shouted slogans denouncing her for vulgarity.

Bhatt, who plays leading heroines, lashed out not only at the magazine but also at the protestors Thursday.

"They are out to malign me and derive publicity out of the whole thing," she said, and added she would sue the magazine as well as the women's groups which organised the protests.

"I am being victimised for no fault of mine," Bhatt said.

Stardust editor Omar Qureshi admitted the cover photo was not Bhatt's.

"It was merely a computer generated image downloaded from an Internet website, where it was featured for over a year prior to its publication," he said.

Mr. Qureshi said his aim was to expose pornography on the Internet.



A Texas state trooper holding a shotgun looks into the back of a van stopped at a check point leading to the Davis Mountain Resort. Members of the anti-government group the Republic of Texas are holed up in the resort in an armed standoff with law enforcement officials (Reuters photo)

Texas authorities make final offer to armed separatists

FORT DAVIS, Texas (AFP) — Texas authorities have made a final offer to 13 armed separatists holed up in a shack near here, and are considering moving in to end the five-day standoff, a lawyer for one of the separatists said.

"I advised my client in no uncertain terms to end it. Rick it's time to come out," Attorney Terence O'Rourke said late Thursday to his stubborn client Richard McLaren, leader of the "Republic of Texas" militia.

"The Texas Rangers and the DPS (Department of Public Safety) have made clear to me that ... they need to be prepared to move to arrest my client and the others for which they have arrest warrants," Mr. O'Rourke said.

Mr. McLaren, the self-proclaimed ambassador of the Republic of Texas, is holed up with 12 other heavily armed militia members in a shack of his property they choose to call their "embassy" since Sunday.

Authorities Thursday resumed negotiations with the separatists but later decided to cut off electricity to the compound to show they were serious in bringing the standoff to a close.

The militia's Internet site was also closed down Thursday, but one-way telephone contact with the compound is being maintained.

"They've been patient," Mr. O'Rourke said of some 100 law enforcement officers surrounding the compound.

"It is clear to me that I have made the best deal under the circumstances. I conveyed to (McLaren) that this is their final written offer. The government is not going to give me another offer," the lawyer added.

Mr. O'Rourke said the final offer was inside a second "diplomatic pouch" an armoured vehicle placed outside Mr. McLaren's property in a subdivision known as the Davis Mountain Resort near here.

Earlier Thursday, the separatists had sent out a packet of papers they described as diplomatic documents for their lawyer.

The late Thursday delivery contained "a detailed response for Mr. McLaren on a ceasefire and the conditions under which he would leave (the compound) and go into custody," Mr. O'Rourke said.

Mike Cox, spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety handling the standoff, confirmed that a final offer was made to Mr. McLaren.

"He's got it and he's able to study it," Mr. Cox stressed.

"We said all along that we want a peaceful outcome and not a wild west outcome" to the standoff, the spokesman said.

Mr. O'Rourke said a reason why authorities were growing impatient with the standoff was the increasing number of armed militias converging on Fort Davis to help Mr. McLaren and his men.

On Wednesday, in Pecos, some 80 kilometres east of here, seven men with assault weapons were arrested. Police said the men were headed to join the separatists.

And Thursday, an Illinois man with a semi-automatic rifle was arrested by police.

Authorities said they received reports that a caravan of three recreational vehicles followed by several cars, some from Arkansas, was on its way to Fort Davis to help Mr. McLaren.

"We received information that some militias want to come here," state trooper John Burton said. "We ask them to stay back. Please, stay back."

Police have set up road blocks on all the roads in a radius of 45 kilometres.

Mr. McLaren is the leader of one of three factions of the Republic of Texas, which believes the United States illegally annexed the state in 1845. They want a referendum to decide the state's fate.

Arrest warrants were served Monday for Mr. McLaren and five of his followers on charges of organised criminal activity and kidnapping.

The group took a husband and wife hostage Sunday, but turned them loose 12 hours later when authorities released a militia member they had arrested on weapons charges.

Talks between authorities and Mr. McLaren broke down late Wednesday following reports the separatists had struck a deal with police and that Mr. McLaren was about to surrender. Talks resumed around midday Thursday.

Mr. McLaren, who is wanted on state and federal contempt of court charges, was reportedly seeking diplomatic immunity and the opportunity to make a case for an independent Texas in federal court.

Official reports announce 720 dead since start of troubles

TIRANA (AFP) — A total of 720 people have died in violent circumstances and more than 1,200 have been injured since the start of troubles in Albania on Feb. 28, according to an official toll published in the Albanian newspaper.

Most of the victims, who include many youths and children, were killed by bullets. Ninety drowned trying to flee the country to Italy, and 32 died in explosions.

Most of the deaths occurred in southern Albania, said the newspaper.

The Albanian newspaper, considered close to President Sali Berisha, also published an unofficial death toll, which is much higher at more than 1,000 dead and 3,000 injured.

During the last 24 hours, eight people were killed during armed hold-ups or a settling of scores, said the Interior Ministry.

Meanwhile, Albania said Thursday it wants the mandate of the Italian-led eight-

nation security force extended, to allow it to guard its borders and abandoned arms depots.

Prime Minister Bashkim Fino told AFP he had called OSCE envoy Franz Vranitzky to urge an extension of the mandate following a blast at an arms depot Tuesday that killed 27 people.

The Albanian army and police are not in a position to guard the 2,500 or so arms and explosives dumps which are in a terrible state and constitute a real danger for the public," Mr. Fino said.

He added that the Albanian customs were also unable to control the trade in scrap metal — including shell cases — which had motivated people to enter the arms dump in northern Albania where Tuesday's tragedy took place.

The 6,000-strong international force, deployed last month, now is charged with ensuring a secure environment for the distribution of

humanitarian aid. Mr. Fino said he had already discussed the question of extending the mandate of the 6,000-strong force with several members of his cabinet.

He added that the matter would be formally breached with the full cabinet Friday. "Albania will then officially ask the force to look at the possibility of broadening its mandate," he said.

Thirteen youths aged between 18 and 25, twelve children aged between eight and 12, and two women entered the depot in a tunnel at Qafe E Shtames, north of Tirana, late Tuesday to dismantle shell casings to sell them as scrap.

The trade in non-ferrous metal of which the hundreds of military depots are a rich source has grown sharply in recent months.

Since the outbreak of violence in Albania in January after the collapse of bogus investment funds, most of the country's army depots

have been looted by rebels while others were abandoned by the military.

Speaking earlier Thursday, Colonel Philippe Roisin, commander of the French component of the peace force, said he expected that the Albanians would put more pressure on its troops to do more.

He added that the politicians who oversee the force via the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe "would stick scrupulously to the terms of its mandate."

On Tuesday, Italian Defense Minister Beniamino Andreatta affirmed in Rome that the peace force would not transform itself into "an army of occupation."

"The multinational force is not a police force," he said, rejecting calls in Italy for the foreign troops to play a bigger security role after the killing by bandits Saturday of an Italian national in the southern port city of Vlore.

Chechen leader, Yeltsin to sign accord next week

MOSCOW (AFP) — Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov will visit Moscow between May 5 and 10 to meet President Boris Yeltsin and sign a peace agreement with Russia, his spokesman Kazbek Khadzhiyev told Interfax News Agency Friday.

The two presidents are expected to sign joint documents covering political and economic issues during the meeting, Mr. Khadzhiyev said, adding that one point in the draft political agreement was still in dispute.

It would be the first meet-

ing between Mr. Yeltsin and Chechen leaders since the Chechens, who have declared independence, drove out Russian troops in a 21-month war ending last August.

Mr. Khadzhiyev said it was up to Mr. Maskhadov and Mr. Yeltsin to resolve the disagreement directly, although he did not specify what it concerned.

He said he was confident that they would reach a mutually acceptable version of a treaty and sign the relevant documents, prepared during talks between dele-

gations from both sides.

Chechen Vice-President Vakha Arsanov told Moscow Echo radio that Mr. Maskhadov had been invited to Moscow to sign a peace treaty.

The invitation came during the latest round of talks between the Chechen leadership and Russian Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin and his Deputy Boris Berezovsky, Mr. Arsanov said.

After talks in the Chechen capital Grozny Wednesday between Mr. Rybkin and Mr. Maskhadov, the two

sides issued a statement saying they favoured "Continuing and strengthening the peace process."

Asked whether the Chechen leaders had prepared any new peace initiatives, Mr. Arsanov said: "There are no plans other than what was agreed on with Mr. Rybkin six weeks ago."

Moscow continues to insist that Chechnya is part of Russia, but in a peace deal signed last August both sides agreed to delay a decision on Chechnya's political status for up to five years.

Taiwan leader apologises over teenager's killing

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui publicly apologised Friday for the brutal killing of a 17-year-old girl, a crime which has sparked nationwide uproar over the country's deteriorating social order.

Pai Hsiao-Yen, the daughter of popular Taiwan television actress Pai Ping-Ping, was snatched on her way to school on April 14. Her dead, mutilated body was found Monday in a drainage ditch near Taipei.

"A string of major crimes recently have caused social instability and feeling of insecurity of the victims' family members. As leader of the government, I am extremely saddened and extend my deepest apology," Mr. Lee was quoted by presidential Secretary General Huang Kun-Hui as saying.

Mr. Lee also pledged to step up judicial, police and security force operations in a crack down on crime and to ensure social stability, Mr. Huang told reporters.

Pai's kidnappers cut off one of her fingers and

mailed it to her mother with a record \$5 million ransom demand before her body was found.

Four suspects have been arrested but police say the masterminds of the killing are still at large.

Mr. Lee made the comments at a top-level national security conference urgently convened amid mounting public concern over worsening social order.

Police forcibly broke up protests by university students demanding top officials including Mr. Lee and Premier Lien Chan take responsibility for Pai's murder.

As the national security conference went ahead in the presidential complex, skirmishes broke out between police and students protesting at what they regard as the island's fractured social order. Police with riot shields dispersed around 20 protestors from near the presidential building but made no arrests, witnesses said.

The group had earlier staged a sit-in outside the National Police Administra-

tion (NPA), demanding the resignation of Taiwan's top police officer, NPA Director Yao Kao-Chiao, charging him with endangering the lives of the public.

The protestors, from the "angered love" group, some in tears, shouted: "Lee Teng-hui must come out and face us" and "Yao Kao-Chiao must resign," as scores of military police barred them from approaching the presidential office.

Opposition politicians, the press and women's groups demanded the government should take responsibility for a decline in social order after the teenager's body was found.

Meanwhile another student group demonstrated outside the cabinet building, accusing Premier Lien Chan of failing to curb major crimes which threatened the lives of innocent people.

Members of the "Chien Mong Flower Student Alliance" delivered a protest letter to officials, calling on Mr. Lien to assume responsibility for social instability caused by rising crime.

The group's leader Chao Tien-Lin vowed to mobilise young people to join the Sunday's mass demonstration, organised by several women's groups, calling for the public's right to live without fear.

Hundreds of university students from all over the island plan to join the march, reports here said.

The alliance also plans to hold speeches at major university campuses, hoping to "turn sadness into strength to thoroughly change the society," Chao said.

Several shocking murders have remained unsolved in Taiwan including the shooting deaths of Taoyuan county Magistrate Liu Pang-You and seven others at his residence in November. Noted woman's rights promoter Peng Wan-Ju was raped and died of 39 knife wounds in the same month.

University students had threatened to boycott classes from next week if top officials including the president and premier failed to take responsibility for Pai's killing.

S. Koreans arrive in Beijing for N. Korean aid talks

BEIJING (AFP) — South Korean Red Cross delegates arrived in Beijing Friday on the eve of landmark inter-Korean talks aimed at getting badly needed food supplies to North Korea's starving populace.

A team of three delegates headed by Lee Byung-Woong arrived on a morning commercial flight from Seoul.

The North Korean counterpart team will arrive on a Saturday morning flight, Ole Gronning, a representative of the Red Cross's International Federation, said by telephone from Pyongyang. It will be led by Paik Yong-Ho.

The meeting — the first face-to-face talks by the respective Red Cross societies of the two hostile Koreas in nearly five years — is set to begin just after 2:00 p.m. (0600 GMT) Saturday at Beijing's Peace Hotel.

Topping the agenda will be means of delivering food aid donated by private South Korean groups to the North's hungry, the Red Cross has said.

Mr. Lee told reporters at Beijing International Air-

port he was optimistic the talks would enhance assistance to the North.

Red Cross sources told newspapers in Seoul Thursday one of the main thrusts of the talks would be to persuade Pyongyang to allow the food to be transported overland, through the demilitarised zone dividing the two Koreas.

That move would save both time and money, they said, adding sea transportation now used for South Korean Red Cross shipments, was costly and time consuming, as was sending food via China.

An official with the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) — which has been leading international efforts to raise food aid — said Friday the talks were pivotal to the developing North Korean situation.

"It's a very important development ... I hope it will bear some fruit," WFP country director Birgitte Kalgren told AFP by telephone from Pyongyang.

South Korean Red Cross sources also said they hoped to raise the issue of reunions among divided

family members on the sidelines of the meeting.

The Red Cross reported earlier this week grain supplies had run out as early as mid-March in the North Korean countryside, where many farmers are now surviving entirely on grass and bark.

Agricultural production in the isolated Stalinist country has been decimated in recent years by mismanagement and natural disasters.

Mr. Lee said the South Korean delegation was hoping to wind up the talks in a single day, but Gronning indicated the meetings may carry over into Sunday.

The two sides finalised details of the Saturday meeting by telephone Thursday. Seoul, which proposed the meeting on April 18, agreed at the North's insistence on Beijing as the venue, rather than the truce village of Panmunjom it preferred, saying time was of the essence.

Although food aid from the South Korean government will not be discussed, officials in Seoul have been quoted as saying they hoped the meeting would help

thaw North-South relations.

Pyeongyang failed to deliver a positive response to a peace overture earlier this month, demanding guarantees of massive food aid from the United States and South Korea before committing itself.

On Wednesday Seoul said it would continue to respond to U.N. aid appeals. But it said flatly direct aid would only be possible in direct government-to-government talks, and the North should ask for it.

Seoul sent 150,000 tonnes of rice free to the North in 1995, but talks on more direct aid broke off when the north refused to regard the talks as government-to-government. Since then it has contributed a total of \$8 million through U.N. drives.

The WFP Monday appealed for a new aid package to North Korea to avert what it said could be "one of the biggest humanitarian disasters of our lifetime" in the country.

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Lesson from Britain

LABOUR LANDSLIDE victory over the Conservatives in the British elections can be explained in many terms ranging from fatigue that resulted from 18 years of Conservative rule, to lack of progress in attempts to settle the North Ireland conflict, to the outgoing party's negative approach to European unity. Yet the most probable explanation to the stunning triumph of Labour is the fact that the British socialists have considerably moved to the right in recent years. No wonder the party platform highlighted the fact that it is the new Labour Party which is waging the election battle and not the old Labour that was voted out of power by the Conservatives almost twenty years ago. Margaret Thatcher won then against a Labour Party which was much influenced by the trade unions. Labour's Tony Blair did a great deal of work to distance the party from the unions and to give it a new face based on moderation and centrism.

We have been witnessing similarity to the British experience here in Jordan. For one we have seen how Islamists and leftists are moving closer to each other in order to counter the new centrist alliance, the National Constitutional Party. For all practical reasons the next parliamentary elections will, therefore, be contested over middle-of-the-road platforms. That is an important element in our democratic experience since it demonstrates how political parties are ready to move away from rigid ideologies and take pragmatic stands that would assure them more votes and bring them closer to power. Contrary to the popular notion that radicalism is on the rise, moderation seems to be the motto of our current era.

Despite some hot spots and the occasional flare-up of conflicts here and there, the general trend is one that is characterised by leanings towards accepting the other and away from radical policies that abruptly change the course of peoples' lives. The British Labourers' move to the centre is in many ways similar to the Jordanian Islamists' move for an understanding with the left. Whether in Europe or in the Mediterranean region some sort of a global trend is emerging. That trend suggests that people, if left to practise their free will, are capable of correcting the wrong paths taken by politicians.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i called on the government to accept the idea of foreign observers monitoring the coming general elections in Jordan, saying that such a practice will bring reassurance to the public about the results. Referring to the outright rejection of foreign observers idea on the part of parliament speaker Said Havel Srou and other government officials, Fakhri Kawayn said that the previous elections in Jordan, which were claimed to have been fair and free, did not prevent people's suspicion of their results and therefore it is advisable to satisfy the public's desire to have one hundred per cent free and fair elections by allowing observers from neutral countries to come and monitor the voting and the counting of the votes. The writer said the government should welcome the idea of foreign observers monitoring the elections in Jordan and so dispel any negative notion about rigging the results or tampering with the ballot boxes. As long as the presence of observers monitoring the elections satisfies the public, said the writer, the idea should not be rejected but rather welcomed.

A WRITER for Al Bustour reflected on the work of the cabinet, as a whole, the council on services affairs and the council dealing with administrative reform and development. Ali Siliadi said that with the creation of the three councils, the government has assumed a three-fold task and has supposedly intensified action to achieve results. But he said that six weeks have elapsed since the formation of the cabinet with its three councils and the public is still awaiting the results and hopes to witness positive action soon. Referring to the elections date, the writer said the government has not yet arrived at a decision and left the door open to rumours, some of which say that the elections will be held on the date when the present parliament's mandate is terminated. He said the public is awaiting positive action in the question of public administration reform and expects reshuffling of officials in key positions so as to attain the required reform and do away with any remnants of corruption. He also said the public awaits speedy and prompt action in these fields since deeds speak louder than words.

The Jordanian Perspective

'Security for Israelis would be better served by meeting the Palestinian's basic rights'

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE EGYPTIAN-Syrian summit last week signalled a certain polarisation rather than regionalism, as was expected from President Hosni Mubarak. As relations between the Israeli government and Palestinians continue to worsen, a deepening polarisation has emerged as the proper description for the extensive political environment between Israel and the Arab World. It is regrettable that Jordan was induced to put on hold all normalisation efforts, ranging from the multilateral peace talks to the Middle East development bank.

The immediate lesson from the Mubarak-Assad summit is that the heady spirit of regional cooperation has been replaced by the menacing prospect of confrontation. Moreover, it is not comforting that some Arab leaders joined their media in being more bellicose and outspoken. The signals coming from Egypt have been especially strident in both tone and substance.

It is a foregone conclusion that the current circumstances make a descent to war highly unlikely, yet the bellicose statements of "jihad, judaisation, assassination" reveal a new trend in the region's rhetoric, compared to the political commentary of four years ago when the Sharm Al Sheikh conclave witnessed a pledge of cooperation against terrorism and violence. Arabs and Israelis felt then that violence had become a non-viable option in the region's rhetoric. The renunciation of "armed-struggle" with the signing of the Oslo accords had created the belief that the region was about to be ushered into a new era.

The Netanyahu government created a stiffening of the moderate Arab states' approach to all issues pertaining to Israel. The shift in state-to-state relations seems to have provided a licence for the more extreme shift in public opinion which expresses itself in execrable acts of violence here and there.

Many people were not surprised by the change in Cairo's political positions. Being one of the most influential actors in the region, the Egyptian government showed early signs that it would moderate a Syrian-led attempt in the Arab World to isolate Israel, following Netanyahu's election victory a year ago. But Cairo has joined Damascus in strongly supporting the creation of pressure against Israel at all levels: Arab, Islamic and international. The ramifications of this shift in Mubarak's strategy had its impact on inter-Arab politics, especially in the Gulf and North

Africa. It was only natural that Egypt would succeed in urging the 52-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) last month to endorse pro-boycott and anti-normalisation language when the Abu Ghneim/Har Homa construction issue was discussed.

Mubarak described the current situation as "the worst crisis since 1977", which signifies that there is a reversion to the pre-Camp David era. Hafez Al Assad was quoted as saying: "I will mobilise the nation's strengths to liberate occupied Arab lands."

The message from the Mubarak-Assad summit is that the region is on the verge of war unless Netanyahu honours his commitments to the Palestinians.

I personally do not believe that the region is on the verge of war though Israeli military officials have suddenly started zeroing in on the purported Syrian programme to equip Damascus with the ability to deliver chemical weapons against Israelis.

The real danger in the area is terrorism which is "lurking" somewhere, waiting for a chance to shatter all hopes for a prosperous region where Palestinians, Israelis and Syrians can live in harmony and peace.

One could expect very little breakthrough in the peace process to emerge as long as the Israeli government does not recognise as absurd its self-proclaimed rights in all Palestinian lands and holy cities.

Netanyahu has been touted in Israel, since his election victory last May, as the only one to be able to exert enough intense efforts to break the stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

His Majesty King Hussein was the leader who advocated giving a chance to the new prime minister of Israel. The sorrow and anguish in the King's words, in an April 30 CNN interview, indicated to all viewers what a disappointment to peace Netanyahu has become.

The whole world, including Washington, realise the difficulties of dealing with a Likud leader whose very approach is behind the current explosively threatening situation and deadlock.

The overwhelming international support for the Palestinian position, especially at the United Nations has done little to make any dent in Netanyahu's refusal to acknowledge Palestinian rights in Jerusalem and their homeland.

It is partially comforting to see Washington send its special envoy, Dennis Ross, to the area this week; it would make the situation a little simpler than it was some weeks ago since both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian track have stated very clearly their positions. For the Palestinians, nothing less than an independent state with East Jerusalem as a capital is acceptable. For Netanyahu, such a Palestinian entity is an anathema. He is even ready to go to war, and to recapture the West Bank and Gaza, to preempt the creation of such a state. Such a thing was on his mind when he ordered soldiers to shoot Palestinians during the confrontation over the Jerusalem tunnel in September 1996.

The point is that the Palestinian political identity has been forged, remoulded and crystallised after decades of sacrifice, sufferings and bloodshed. It is too late to force them to accept what Israel is willing to give now. Much as we would like to follow the path of peace through dialogue, open and discrete channels, it seems inevitable, due to Netanyahu's rigidity, that more blood will be shed on both sides before real charges are brought about one the ground towards Israel's acceptance of realities.

One could indeed sort of agree with Netanyahu when he asserts that any peace agreement his present government reaches with the Palestinians would be the strongest to hold in the long term. By virtue of its hardline components, the rejectionists are heavily represented. If, by a miracle, Arafat reaches any solemnity with that coalition, it will certainly survive and weather all future political tempests, from Shas to Mifdal to Gosh Emonim. But what the present government is affirming is void of real content in terms of Palestinian rights.

So, the only option is to convince the Israeli coalition to appreciate that the concept of "security for Israelis" would be better served by meeting the Palestinian's basic rights. A Jordanian, Egyptian and American effort might be one of the means to attain that aim.

If that job is not accomplished in the next two years, then let us wait for the next Israeli election, which, judging by the way things are going today, will definitely produce a different government.

Rubinstein's Bar On report seems to 'have done the Israeli state and its legal system a grave disservice'

By G.H. Jansen

"DON'T LET the racist genie out of the bottle." Those were the wise and warning words addressed by President Ezer Weizman to the people of Israel and, in particular, to members of the two million strong Sephardi community, largely from Morocco, following the controversial ruling by the present attorney general on what has come to be known as the "Bar On affair."

This ongoing scandal involved the attempted appointment by the government of Prime Ministry Benjamin Netanyahu of a completely unsuitable candidate, Roni Bar On, to the influential and sensitive position of attorney general on the understanding that he would bargain a case against a leading Sephardi politician, Arieh Deri. The public outcry against Bar On was so great that he was forced to resign within a day and a new, more suitable candidate, Judge Elyakim Rubinstein, was proposed and confirmed in the position. But when he investigated criminal aspects of the deal to appoint Bar On, the highly respected Rubinstein indicted only Deri for breach of trust, extortion and fraud, giving rise to a new public outcry, issuing this time from the Sephardi community.

Thus, of the four persons, including Netanyahu, investigated over the Bar On affair, three were not indicted, allegedly for lack of evidence. And all three belong to the "Western", or Ashkenazi, community.

Weizman's words were prompted by a public protest gathering of 15,000 members of the Sephardi community's Orthodox Shas Party. The demonstration, held on the campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was addressed by Arieh Deri, the founder and leader of Shas, who lashed out at the Ashkenazi establishment of the Jewish state, condemning the secular Zionists who founded the state as a "movement... determined to annihilate the Torah Jewish scripture, our religion and the culture of the Sephardi Jews."

The mood of the 15,000 Sephardis and of Deri, as the main focus of the demonstration, was very belligerent. Deri was carried round the stadium shoulder-high to the accompaniment of slogans like "Deri, we are with you," or "We are all Deris." By the end of the meeting the crowd had become so worked up, there was talk of marching on the nearby building of the Supreme Court which, unfortunately, had let itself be drawn into the Bar On affair.

Thus, the president's words came too late — after the Sephardi community and Deri's Shas Party had already released the genie.

There is a long-standing antagonism between the Ashkenazis, who originate from Eastern and Central Europe, and the Sephardis, who originate from the Arab World and south and southeast Asia. Ashkenazis and Sephardis do not differ radically in religion from each other, as do Sunnis and Shiites in Islam or as do Catholics and Protestants within Christianity. The differences between the two Jewish sects — Israel has both an Ashkenazi and a Sephardi rabbi — are for the most part cultural, sartorial and, even, gastronomic. And, of course, economic.

As happens from time to time in Muslim countries, where there are outbursts of antagonism between Sunnis and Shiites, so too there are outbursts between Ashkenazis and Sephardis in Israel. The most striking case was in 1959 after there had been a particularly large influx of Jews from Morocco. Before the Bar On affair stirred up old tensions, relations between the communities had stabilised and there was, even, considerable inter-marriage. But antagonism could rise again if the Supreme Court does not take

into serious consideration five petitions asking for the revocation of the indictment against Deri.

Deri has been a controversial figure in Israeli politics for many years and will, increasingly, be a prominent and powerful figure in the state. He has been on trial, on corruption charges, since 1993. He has come to be known as "the indispensable man" of Israeli politics because his Shas Party has the ten key votes in the Knesset which make or break governments. It has taken him 14 years to build up Shas, the first party to successfully represent the Sephardi underclass for whom he did a great deal while he was minister of the interior under the previous Likud government. In particular, he quite openly, diverted state funds for the betterment of Sephardi institutions (without strictly accounting for expenditures) and development towns, municipalities and villages. As a result, his community, through Shas, expresses its gratitude by giving him unquestioning support. So much so that Deri estimates Shas can expect to double its representation in the next Knesset, which would make it a major power in the land of Israel where power is very fragmented. Sephardi anger over the

Rubinstein report has seeped into the Israeli society as a whole. There is a feeling that he has done the Israeli state and its legal system a grave disservice. For his report on the Bar On scandal was so ambiguous that he, unwittingly, exacerbated the crisis by making confusion worse by saying, repeatedly, that while there was cause for "suspicion" there was not enough evidence to justify the issuance of an indictment against Netanyahu.

Minister of Justice Tsahi Hanegbi, and the director of the prime minister's office, Avigdor Lieberman. And the weakness of the report reminded the Israeli public that Rubinstein has, for a long time, been associated with Netanyahu's Likud Party. Thus, Rubinstein's non-indictment of the present prime minister is seen as unworthy of someone expected to be a non-political attorney general. The Bar On affair has left the public both bewildered and indignant.

A petition asking for a commission of inquiry is being signed at booths set up by Shas across Israel. Its target is 50,000 signatures. That target will almost certainly be reached and passed because the agitation has crossed party lines. Even a group called "Young Labour," an offshoot of the Labour Party now in

opposition, announced its support for the campaign being waged by the Shas Party.

Even the Druze community inside Israel has decided to align itself with Shas and Deri at this time. The Druze is a quasi-Muslim sect with its main base in Lebanon whose support to the Jewish state and its armed forces is of great significance to the Arab World.

The divisions created by the Bar On affair and the Rubinstein report now threaten the internal unity of the Jewish state, an internal unity that is vital to the strength and survival of that state. And to make matters worse, the Bar On affair has stalled the regional peace process, risking its total collapse.

The situation is so desperate that one of the four contenders for the leadership of the Labour Party, Yossi Beilin, also one of the prime movers of the peace process, has gone off on his own to meet with Palestine President Yasser Arafat and draft a mutually acceptable plan for the revival of negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. His efforts have, of course, been rejected by Netanyahu and his right wing government.

This is why the Bar On scandal and its consequences will resonate through Israeli and West Asian affairs for many a year to come.

Britain's Labour not likely to shift balance of things in region

REVIEWED BY
ELI NASRALLAH

THE MIDDLE East issue, in light of the victory of the Labour Party in the British general elections and of the Israeli government policies, was discussed by the columnists in the local dailies, along with the situation in Algeria and domestic affairs.

A writer for Al Bustour expressed the view that the new Labour government in Britain will not be less favourable towards Israel than the outgoing Conservatives.

Nabil Sharif said that Tony Blair, the Labour leader who will form a new government in Britain, maintains close ties with the Clinton administration and has been coordinating his party's policies towards the Middle East and Iraq with President Clinton's advisers who are all Jews and biased towards Israel.

The writer said it is true that the Labour Party had been showing interest in playing a bigger role in the Middle East, but recently its leaders were showing more and more inclination towards supporting the

Conservatives' position in this particular issue.

As to Iraq, the writer said that the coming rulers of Britain are most likely to support the views of the U.N. administration and Israel.

The Middle East question was also discussed by Al Ra'i Arabic daily which, in an editorial commenting on the CNN televised interviews with King Hussein and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu, said that the Israeli prime minister has reaffirmed his hardline position with regard to peace.

Whereas King Hussein spoke frankly about the need for a comprehensive peace in the region to secure stability and progress for its people, Mr. Netanyahu was repeating his own statements about the situation and reasserting Israel's policies which, said the paper, have brought the peace process to a standstill.

In his remarks, the King voiced hope that Israel will respond to the calls of reason and refrain from committing acts that would further cause deterioration in the situation, noted the paper, expressing hope

that the Israeli leaders will resort to reason and logic.

A writer for Al Ra'i criticised the Arab states for resorting to the U.N. Security Council which, he said, only favours Israel and its American ally and can by no means bring about justice.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

The latest U.S. veto at the council's meeting, which killed a resolution demanding that Israel desist from building settlements on Arab lands, should give the Arabs a good lesson that the U.S.-Israeli alliance cannot be addressed at the U.N. meetings, said Mohammad Qanun.

The writer said that the Arabs possess the actual tools for overturning the balance in their own favour through solidarity, through ending their differences and through acting in concert on all matters concerning Palestine, the occupied Lebanese and Syrian territories and with regard to the continued U.S.-backed embargo imposed on Iraq.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer

for Al Ra'i, described the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation as causing real concern to the Arab countries, particularly Syria and Iraq.

The writer said that the Turkish defence minister's visit to Israel to coordinate military matters represents a new, dan-

gerous, turning point, following the conclusion of the military agreement between the two sides last year.

The writer referred to Turkey's differences with Iraq and Syria, resulting from Ankara's refusal to share the river waters with the two Arab states on fair basis, and said that the enmity is being escalated and encouraged by Israel, the main foe of the two Arab states in the region.

The Turkish-Israeli regional military alliance, warned the writer, is clearly directed against the Arab Nation's interests.

The massacres in Algeria were the topic tackled by Fakhri Kawayn, a writer for Al Ra'i, who said that the barbaric attacks on

women, children and innocent people by extremist groups in Algeria are causing real concern to the Arab states.

Blaming the Algerian president and government for the continuation of the tragic situation, the writer said that since they cannot stop the massacres, the government leaders have to quit and call for immediate elections.

He said if the American and French intelligence services are behind the massacres with the purpose of keeping the country backward, the Algerian government must know that and act promptly to put an end to the killings.

He said mere government statements cannot stop the killings and the time has come for the Algerian government leaders to think of establishing political pluralism and start preparing for the introduction of real democracy, based on the rule of the majority.

A writer for Al Bustour criticised the Jordanian universities for failing to prepare themselves to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

Feeling impotent due to finan-

cial constraints, these universities lack means of conducting research to help the country's development process and they all lack a strategy on the future of higher education or a mere programme to help the country carry out reforms, said Suleiman Arabiyat.

Waiting for the government to come to the rescue does not solve the problem since the government lacks funds which it can grant to the universities to help them deal with these problems, said the writer who stressed the need for the universities themselves to adopt a programme on higher education in the coming century, partly by ensuring financial resources to finance research.

Noting that more than 35 years have elapsed since the country established the University of Jordan, which graduated thousands of trained men and women, the writer said that very slow progress has been done so far to enable Jordan's higher institutes of education, which have grown in number, to cater to the real needs of the Kingdom.

Features

'Publication on Muslim Brotherhood reflects a Western perspective of the Islamists that is valid, accurate, but incomplete'

Between Pragmatism and Ideology: The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, 1989-1994

By Sabah Al Said

Policy Papers Number 39, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy,

Washington, D.C., 1995, 66 pages

THIS RECENT publication in the Washington Institute's respected series of Policy Papers is one of the few serious attempts in English or Arabic to assess the position and performance of Jordan's political Islamists since they burst onto the public scene as a major player in the political game after 1989 (they were a major player before that, but were not officially allowed to engage in politics until the liberalisation of 1989).

This study is at once pioneering, impressive, timely and very useful, but also incomplete in some aspects. The author, a Cambridge-educated British national of Iraqi descent who works as a researcher in London for HRH Crown Prince Hassan, was a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute when he wrote this study.

Mr. Said correctly states that the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood has achieved practical successes that have eluded its counterparts in other Mideast

states, and thus merits such an analysis; but to state that "it has developed without the constraint of constant state interference" is perhaps distorting reality slightly, given that the Jordanian state has, alternately, tacitly backed or quietly muffled the Brotherhood's public political strength in recent decades, depending on the needs of the time.

Mr. Said notes that since no single Islamist movement can be taken as a paradigm for the others, he aims to produce a case study, not a model, whose central question is "whether the policies espoused by Jordan's Islamists are motivated primarily by ideology or pragmatism".

This is an important question that must be addressed on an ongoing basis, given the strong showing by Islamists throughout the region and their expected continued role in political change and even national identity. Thus, the author and the Washington Institute are both to be com-

mended for undertaking this study, which is well worth buying and reading despite its limited shortcomings.

The methodology is rather straightforward: "To assess Islamist policies in Jordan, this study focuses on the five key areas most salient to a general inquiry into the possible nature of 'Islamic government'. For each of these areas, the Islamists' basic position is outlined, evaluated for a congruence between rhetoric and action, for the extent of unity throughout the organisation, and consistency over time; and finally graded as to whether ideology or pragmatism predominates."

The five areas of inquiry are: What is the Islamist view of domestic politics, foreign policy, women, minorities and Islamist economics? His analysis of Islamist official statements and actions in the period 1989-1994 on each of these five issues leads him to conclude that "the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islam-

ic Action Front have demonstrated the greatest pragmatism regarding government and domestic politics, while their positions on the Arab-Israeli peace process and women's role in society have been driven by strict ideology and are the least flexible and pragmatic."

The Islamists are seen to be accommodating and pragmatic in their attitude to minorities, on issues such as banning alcohol, the author notes, probably due to prevailing national political ethics and realities such as the Jordanian Constitution, pertinent laws, and the National Charter. In domestic politics, the Islamists' various tactical alliances suggest flexibility, while their economic policies and proposals appear to be "vague and internally inconsistent". The Islamists are guided by "narrow, strict approaches to gender issues", such as their advocacy of segregation by sex. They have remained consistent, inflexible and hardline in their policy towards Israel, the peace treaty and the United States.

While noting their inflexibility on the issues of women and peace with Israel, the author concludes that "despite their ideological origin, Jordanian Islamists have had to become adept at the politics of compromise in order to proceed towards their ulti-

mate goal of the complete Islamisation of society."

He also concludes that "in general, there has been congruence between the Muslim Brotherhood's rhetoric and its actions... although there is basic unity within the MB and usually a clear 'party line', there are divisions along regional (East Bankers versus Jordanians of Palestinian origin) and generational lines... the MB has displayed both an ability to change with the times on some issues and consistency over time on others... the MB holds complex and diverse views that cannot be characterised as exclusively ideological or pragmatic. Some of its policy stands are formed by ideological considerations, some by pragmatic considerations, and some by a mixture of both."

This study accurately and usefully documents the complexities and pragmatism inherent in most but not all Islamist positions. My main criticism of this work — and of most Western analyses of Arab Islamists — is its unspoken attitude to the Islamists as primarily a religious rather than a political movement. The conclusions that Mr. Said draws about the Islamists — their complex,

camp, and the Pope in the other relatively rigid one. Are the Islamists a religious movement that dabbles in politics, or a political movement that draws on religious attributes?

The author seems to recognise this question when he states in his final section that "While it (the Muslim Brotherhood) is an ideological organisation in origin and some of its policies can be traced to that origin, in Jordan it has become a political force like any other, operating pragmatically within an imperfect world."

Had this been the starting point rather than the end point of the study, the author could have explored some other dimensions of the Islamist phenomenon that I think are more important today, and less well understood, such as: Why are Islamists declining in strength, if they are declining? What is the relationship between Islamism and tribalism? How do the Islamists relate to the existing Jordanian power oligarchy today as opposed to a few decades ago? And, what are the relationships between the Muslim Brotherhood and powerful independent Islamists, such as Laith Shbeilat, whose popularity does not seem to have dropped in line with the overall Islamist slippage?

The study's appendices

provide Islamist electoral positions in English, which non-Arabic speakers would find very useful. The scope and approach of this study are too limited, in my view, for the intellectual capacity of the author and the sponsoring institute, both of whom would do well in future to broaden their analysis to encompass the full, wider context in which Jordanian Islamism continues to work and change. A follow-up study of Islamists in Jordan in the period 1994-1997 would be well worth attempting, especially in view of the recent split in the Islamic Action Front and the public acknowledgement by some leading Islamists that they must become more effective politicians or else risk losing their impact on political decision making and return to being a religious/social movement that has personal relevance but little political relevance.

The larger question this raises is whether Islamists, and Arab political culture in general, will be studied from a Western or a Middle Eastern perspective. This publication largely reflects a Western perspective of the Islamists that is valid, accurate, but incomplete. We look forward to more good work in this field by the Washington Institute and Sabah Al Said.

Rami G. Khouri

BOOK REVIEW

The author's statement that the Muslim Brotherhood "is currently the most influential political movement in Jordan" is debatable, given the clear decline of the Islamists in recent years and the rise of the much more powerful, if informal, tribal-corporate alliance. To be fair, though, the MB's decline has been most marked since 1994, after the period covered in this study. Whatever the

non-linear combination of ideology, pragmatism, compromise and inflexibility — could apply just as easily to, say, Newt Gingrich or others of his ilk. To be partly flexible and partly rigid is to be wholly political, and very un-religious. I would guess that a comparison between the Islamists, the Pope, and Newt Gingrich would show the Islamists and Gingrich in one relatively flexible

'Babies should spend the night apart from parents, but it makes no sense'

By Robert Wright

EVERY NIGHT thousands of parents, following standard child-care advice, engage in a bloodcurdling ritual. They put their several months old infant in a crib, leave the room, and studiously ignore its crying. The crying may go on for 20 or 30 minutes before a parent is allowed to return. The baby may then be patted but not picked up, and the parent must quickly leave, after which the crying typically resumes. Eventually sleep comes, but the ritual recurs when the child awakes during the night.

The same thing happens the next night, except that the parent must wait five minutes longer before the designated patting. This goes on for a week, two weeks, maybe even a month. If all goes well, the day finally arrives when the child can fall asleep without fuss and go the whole night without being fed. For Mommy and Daddy, it is party time.

This is known as "Ferberising" a child, after Richard Ferber, America's best-known expert on infant sleep. Many parents find his prescribed boot camp for babies agonising, but they persist because they have been assured it is harmless. Ferber depicts the ritual as the child's natural progress toward natural self-reliance. What sounds to the untrained ear like a baby wailing in desperate protest of abandonment is described by Ferber as a child "learning the new associations."

At this point I should own up to my bias: my wife and I are failed Ferberisers. When our first daughter proved capable of crying for 45 minutes without reloading, we gave up and let her sleep in our bed. When our second daughter showed up three years later, we did not even bother to set up the crib.

How did we have the hubris to defy the mainstream of current child-care wisdom? That brings me to my second bias: Dar-

winism. For our species, the natural night-time arrangement is for kids to sleep alongside their mothers for the first few years. At least, that is the norm in hunter-gatherer societies, the closest things we have to a model of the social environment in which humans evolved. Mothers typically nurse their children to sleep and then nurse on demand through the night. Sounds taxing, but it is not. When the baby cries, the mother starts nursing reflexively, often without really waking up. (And the father, as I can personally attest, never awakens.)

Just because Ferberisation is unnatural does not necessarily mean it is bad. If parents find it ultimately worth the trouble, that is their prerogative. But Ferber goes further: he depicts his regime as a matter not just of parental convenience but of parental duty. He claims that children need to sleep alone. "Even if you and your child seem happy about his sharing

your bed at night," he writes in "Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems", "and even if he seems to sleep well there, in the long run this habit will probably not be good for either of you."

Why, exactly, is it bad to sleep with your kids? Learning to sleep alone, says Ferber, lets your child "see himself as an independent individual." I'm puzzled. It is not obvious to me how a baby would develop a robust sense of autonomy while confined to a small cubicle with bars on the side and rendered powerless to influence its environment. (Nor is it obvious these days, when many American kids spend 40 hours a week in day care, that they need extra autonomy training.) I would be willing to look at the evidence behind this claim, but there is not any. Comparing Ferberised with non-Ferberised kids as they grow up would tell us nothing. After all, Ferberising and non-Ferberising parents no doubt tend to have

broadly different approaches to child rearing, and they probably have different cultural milieus. We cannot control our variables.

Lacking data, Ferber and other experts make creative assertions about what is going on inside the child's head. Ferber says that if you let a toddler sleep between you and your spouse, "in a sense separating the two of you, he may feel too powerful and become worried." Well, he may, I guess. Or he may just feel cosy. Hard to say (though he certainly looks cosy). Child-care guru T. Berry Brazelton tells us that when a child wakes up at night and you refuse to retrieve her from the crib, "she won't like it, but she'll understand." Oh.

According to Ferber, the trouble with letting a child who fears sleeping alone into your bed is that "you are not really solving the problem. There must be a reason why he is so fearful." Yes, there must. Here is one candidate. Maybe your child's brain was

designed by natural selection over millions of years during which mothers slept with their babies. Maybe back then if babies found themselves alone at night it often meant bad news (that the mother had been eaten by a beast, say). Maybe the young brain is designed to respond to this situation by screaming so that any relatives within earshot will discover the child. Maybe, in short, the reason that kids left alone sound terrified is that kids left alone naturally get terrified. Just a theory.

A few weeks of nightly terror presumably won't scar a child for life. If Ferber's gospel barks kids, it is more likely doing so via a second route: the denial of mother's milk to the child at night. Breast milk, researchers are finding, is a kind of "external placenta," loaded with hormones masterfully engineered to assist development. One study found that it boosts IQ.

Presumably most, and perhaps all, breast-feeding

benefits can be delivered via daytime nursing. Still, we certainly do not know that an 11-hour nightly gap in the feeding schedule is not doing harm. And we do know that such a gap is not part of nature's plan for a five-month-old child — at least, to judge by hunter-gatherer societies. Or to judge by the milk itself: it is thin and watery — typical of species that nurse frequently. Or to judge by mothers. Abruptly ending night-time nursing can lead to painful engorgement or even breast infection. Meanwhile, as all available evidence suggests that night-time feeding is natural, Ferber asserts the opposite. If after three months of age your baby wakes repeatedly, demanding to be fed, "she is developing a sleep problem."

As "family bed" boosters have noted, male physicians, who have no idea what motherhood is like, have cowed women for decades into doing unnatural and destructive things. For a while doctors said

mothers should not feed more than once every four hours. Now they admit they were wrong. For a while they pushed bottle feeding. Now they admit this was wrong. For a while they told pregnant women to keep weight gains minimal (and some women did so by smoking more cigarettes!). Wrong again.

There are signs that yet another well-advised retreat is under way. Though Ferber has not put out the white flag, Brazelton is sounding less and less dismissive of parents who sleep with their kids. (Not surprisingly, the least dismissive big-name child-care expert is a woman, Penelope Leach). Better later than never. But in child care, as in the behavioural sciences generally, we could have saved ourselves a lot of time and trouble by recognising at the outset that people are animals and pondering the implications of that fact.

Time magazine

National Liberation Army of Iran — 'a knife in the side of the Tehran government'

By Michael S. Serrill

A FEW months ago, Banul Ebrahimi, 18, was a high school student in Tehran. The daughter of a shopkeeper, she was relatively well off but enormously frustrated with the dictates of the Islamic fundamentalists who rule Iran. "Women were not allowed to do anything productive," she complains.

After two arrests by Iran's ubiquitous secret police for openly complaining about the mullahs, Ebrahimi fled, but not to Europe or the U.S. Today she resides in a dusty camp in Iraq, a soldier in one of the most unusual and little known military forces in the world. The National Liberation Army (NLA) of Iran is 30,000 strong, fully armoured and ready at any moment to do battle. Some 35 per cent of its soldiers are women, as are 70 per cent of its officers. The troops wear no insignia of rank, live communally and receive no pay. They have taken a vow to remain celibate until Iran is freed. And all express near fanatical loyalty to the woman they hope to install as the next president of Iran:

Maryam Rajavi.

Successors to the leftist People's Mujahedeen, which helped overthrow Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the soldiers of the rebel force are bivouacked in five camps in the barren salt desert of Iraq, just out of range of Iranian artillery. Critics call them pawns of the Iraqis, who are said to have given the resisters money and arms in addition to a generous swath of desert land. They also say Rajavi hardly represents a democratic alternative to the current regime.

But the NLA remains the strongest opposition to a government that last week was again proved to be an international renegade. A German court, in convicting four men of the 1992 murder of four Iranian Kurd dissidents in Berlin, found that the killings were approved at the "highest state levels" in Tehran. After the verdict, Germany recalled its ambassador, ejected four Iranian diplomats and announced it was reassessing the policy of "critical dialogue" that has allowed Bonn to become Iran's principal Western trading

partner.

The Germans' anger could only give heart to the NLA, whose desert battalions have been poised to make war against the fundamentalist government since 1988. The army's finest moment came in 1991, when it successfully fought off a large-scale incursion by a force of elite Revolutionary Guards. The NLA's officers claim they have launched more than 100 cross borders operations against Iran in the past several years. The Iranians have responded with terrorist strikes, Scud missiles and, in January, a mortar assault on the NLA's fortified compound in downtown Baghdad, causing minor damage.

When the moment is right, say leaders of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCR), the rebels' civilian arm, the NLA will roll across the border in support of a general uprising against the fundamentalist Iranian government. "We intend to combine the army with the rising of social unrest to sweep away the mullahs," NCR president Maryam Rajavi told the Time. "The

mullahs are a regime that doesn't understand any language other than force and power." NCR leaders believe, perhaps too optimistically, that burgeoning discontent with Iran's faltering economy, which has led to open protests and riots in recent months, means their moment may soon be at hand.

Rajavi, a former student leader trained as a metallurgical engineer, rules the rebel force together with her husband Massoud, who was head of the People's Mujahedeen when the shah was overthrown and exiled in 1979. Massoud was soon forced to flee the country as the Ayatollah Robollah Khomeini began killing and imprisoning Massoud's largely secular followers. Since then Maryam and Massoud have built up not only one of the world's most formidable rebel armies but a sophisticated resistance movement as well, with offices around the world, plus five radio stations and a new satellite-television network that beam anti-mullah propaganda daily into Iranian homes.

The prominence of

women is the rebel movement's most striking feature. "When I was in Iran, I was taught that I was nothing," Ebrahimi says. "I could have no job. I was no use to society. After learning to fight and working with men as an equal, I feel pride."

"Wanna take a ride?" shouts Moujila Nasferi, a tank driver who left a comfortable life in the U.S. seven years ago to join Rajavi's warriors. Her face and hands stained black from cleaning her Russian T-55 tank's gun barrel, Nasferi slips into the small driver's hatch beneath the turret of the tank, which jumps as she jams it into gear and guides it easily across the desert. In Washington, where she lived from 1977 to 1989, "I had my own house, a car and a job, but I kept listening to reports of how bad things were in my country," she says. So she decided she had to go home.

That she is one of thousands of women who have joined the rebel movement is a measure of the degree to which Tehran has trampled women's rights, says Maryam Rajavi. "The worst and most savage of

the regime's repression is directed towards women," she says. "So in our army, women have key roles."

Women — dressed in fatigues topped off with green scarves — not only drive tanks but also pilot attack helicopters and command mixed-sex battalions. "The women are for real," says Patrick Clawson, an Iran expert at the National Defence University in Washington. "They have a role in combat and a significant role in the organisation." Men and women live separately, even when married to each other, in neat, clean, 20-bed dormitories. The men have learned to respect the women's military skills. Says Ali Andelavi, 25, a defector from the Revolutionary Guards who is now an engineer in the rebel army: "In Iran I didn't recognise women even to speak to them. I thought they were subhuman. Here many of my commanders are women."

Notwithstanding their credentials as fighters against a government Washington loves to hate, the NCR and the NLA have no backing on the banks of the Potomac.

Clinton administration officials stand by a 1994 State Department report that accuses Massoud Rajavi and other People's Mujahedeen leaders of terror against the U.S. in the 1970s. The report goes on to charge that the group still has Marxist leanings, strong ties to Saddam Hussein and few democratic tendencies. "There is a cult of personality around Massoud and Maryam Rajavi that is unhealthy," says Michael Eisenstadt, an Iran expert at the Washington Institute on Near East Policy. "If they were to achieve power, it is unlikely they would give it up."

Western experts doubt claims by the NCR that it is funded by the Iranian exile community, contending that Saddam pays for its operations. Most of the NLA's armour and other equipment, they say, was captured from Iran towards the end of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war that ended in 1988. The Massouds "are simply not a viable alternative to the current regime because of their ties to Iraq," says Eisenstadt. Clawson says the People's Mujahedeen's radical-left politics is also

out of step. "Their day is past," he says.

But one cannot tell that from the bustle of military activity at the Zahra Rajavi training base in southern Iraq, where volunteers get their basic training. Commander Mehdi Madadi says he has seen a 500 per cent rise in new recruits in the past year. "We are seeing young people come across the border in groups of 15 and 20," he says. "They don't remember the shah or know much about the People's Mujahedeen. They just have no hope and no future."

Mojtaba Shadhash, 23, is one of them. Her brother joined the NLA a year ago, she said, and she was subsequently arrested and harassed by Iranian police. Two months ago, she walked for two days across the mountains to join her brother in the Iraqi desert. Her sole aim: "I want to overthrow the regime." Her passion, and that of her companions in arms, is not enough. But clearly the National Liberation Army will remain a knife in the side of the Tehran government for years to come.

Time magazine

Palestinians work longer hours for less pay — report

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinians are working longer hours for less pay due to the deteriorating economic situation under Israel's 14-month closure of the territories, a report issued Friday said.

Palestinian workers earn an average 49 shekels (\$14) a day, down from 60 shekels (\$18) a day in September 1995, said the report by the Palestinian labour ministry printed in the Al Quds daily newspaper.

A Palestinian also works an average of 44 hours per week, compared to 43.1 hours a week in September 1995, the report said.

The report said unemployment in the Palestinian territories had risen since

September 1995 from 18 per cent to 28 per cent.

Israel has clamped a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, preventing workers and goods from entering Israel, since a string of anti-Israeli suicide bombings in February 1996.

United Nations reports have said the per capita gross national product for Palestinians has fallen 36 per cent since the closure was imposed.

The Israeli government last week raised the number of workers permitted to pass to their jobs in Israel to 50,000. Some 120,000 Palestinians worked in Israel in 1990.

Wolfensohn says World Bank income is declining

WASHINGTON (AP) — The president of the World Bank gave finance and development ministers of industrialised countries "a cold shower" by warning that the bank's ability to help poor countries may be limited in the future because the money it makes from commercial operations is declining.

He said the 180-nation organisation was "not some miracle source of income" that constantly produces a profit and can pay for any project that countries request.

The bank's president, James Wolfensohn stressed that the bank was financially sound and "there is no immediate crisis."

But he said the bank had to examine its income just as a family or a business does to see that it had sufficient funds for its undertakings.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin had called for the bank to transfer \$300 million of its income over the next two to three years to a division that provides insurance to companies who invest in developing countries.

When Mr. Wolfensohn launched his plan to reorganise the bank earlier in the year he warned that it would be necessary to reexamine the bank's declining income.

He told reporters that the bank's \$15 billion in annual lending only generates a profit of \$37.5 million, largely the result of moving to a floating interest rate system.

"I just thought it was a nice idea to give the executive board a cold shower" about the need to contribute funds to various bank operations rather than move money around.

But even though the United States owes the organisation more than \$1 billion, Mr. Wolfensohn said Mr. Rubin "was trying to balance his interests with current (budget) limitations" imposed by Congress.

The division that tends to insure companies investing in developing countries is called the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency or MIGA.

In a communique, the joint bank and IMF development committee said MIGA is "rapidly approaching the limits of its financial capacity."

With more \$200 billion a year being invested in developing countries by private companies, the committee said "expedient" action is needed to resolve the issue.

Italy called for major shareholders in the bank to provide the funds for MIGA. The major shareholder in the 50-year-old bank is the United States. A compromise solution would involve additional contributions and a shift in bank income to MIGA.

A solution is expected to be ready when the bank holds its annual meeting in Hong Kong in September.

Iran becomes world's biggest wheat buyer

LONDON (R) — Iran is emerging as the world's biggest wheat importer in a development that puzzles trade analysts.

A report on Thursday by the London-based International Grains Council (IGC), which put a spotlight on Iran's surging imports, also forecast a record global harvest this year of coarse grains — mainly maize.

The IGC, an authoritative monitor of cereals markets, predicts that Iran will import 6.6 million tonnes of wheat in the 12 months to June 30, 1997. The huge volume puts it ahead of Egypt and Japan.

But the IGC does not venture an opinion on why Iran's imports should be running at more than double the previous year's estimate.

Trade analysts suspect that some of the wheat may be reexported elsewhere in Central Asia, possibly to war-racked Afghanistan.

Pakistan closed its borders with Afghanistan on March 29 in an attempt to check smuggling of wheat to that country which had led to flour shortages.

Iran subsidises bread to its population of 60 million, which may also push up consumption, and it suffered some earthquake damage to crops in March.

Australia, Canada and even the European Union (EU) have made sales of wheat to Iran.

Its emergence as such a big player in the grains trade raised fears of disruption to the international market during the political row with Western powers which followed a recent German court finding that Iran ordered the 1992 murder of four Kurdish activists in Berlin.

The IGC prediction of 6.6 million tonnes of wheat and flour imports by Iran puts it ahead of Egypt on 6.2 and

Japan at 6.0 million tonnes. The forecast was sharply up from an estimate of 5.0 million tonnes a month ago and from the estimated total for 1995-96 of 3.0 million.

On a wider horizon, the IGC has forecast a record crop of coarse grains. Total production of maize, barley, sorghum rye and oats is set to leap to 895 million tonnes, from 889 million in 1996, on higher production in China and central and eastern Europe.

A change in eating habits in the Asia means that the extra grain is needed. As consumption of meat, especially pork and chicken, rises, demand for maize, used to make animal feed, has risen.

Production of wheat is set to fall to 578 million tonnes compared with a bumper 580 million in 1996, because of falls in the United States and Europe.

But weather remains the big unknown, grain traders said. The United States has been hit by freeze and flood, while the EU has suffered prolonged dry weather, which has damaged crops in Britain and France.

Its report was issued against a backdrop of renewed concern about high grain prices, at a time when world stocks are around the lowest in 20 years.

Wheat prices "spiked" to historic highs in Chicago grain pits at \$7.50 per bushel early in 1996. After flood and freeze in North America and a prolonged dry spell in Europe, some analysts see a risk that importers will again be paying inflated food bills. Chicago wheat traded at \$4.50 in April, up from \$3.80 at the end of 1996, and the European Union has reimposed a tax on exports to keep a lid on its internal prices.

Algeria's industry output falls, energy rises

PARIS (R) — Algeria's industrial output fell 6.2 per cent in the first nine months of 1996 compared with the same period in 1995, official figures have showed. But oil and gas output, the mainstay of the North African country's economy, rose by 5.7 per cent, according to National Office of Statistics (ONS) data carried by the government-controlled newspaper Al Moudjahid. Electricity out-

put grew 3.9 per cent. The iron and steel industry was the worst hit in the first nine months of 1996, when output sank 18.7 per cent. Chemical industry output fell 17.1 per cent. The data did not mention the impact of the civil strife on output but the ONS said "Industrial activity continues to be affected by cash flow and imported raw material problems."

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GBP
US Dollar	1.7253	0.6209	1.4697	126.71	1.3620	1710.20	1.9410	8.6200	
DE Mark	0.5796	-	0.3594	0.8518	73.43	0.8005	990.62	1.1249	3.3718
GB Sterling	1.6106	2.7800	-	2.3677	204.09	2.2258	2753.08	3.1278	9.3890
CH Franc	0.6804	117.33	0.4218	-	86.19	0.8390	1162.77	132.00	3.9853
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3815	0.4896	1.1605	-	1.0902	13.47	153.20	4.5811
CA Dollar	0.7236	1.2378	0.4407	1.0635	1.09	-	1224.70	1.3927	4.1726
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0097	0.3631	0.0861	1349.89	0.8087	-	11.36	3.4033
NL Guilder	0.5151	88.87	0.3194	75.74	65.20	0.7115	879.28	-	2.9943
FR Franc	0.1716	0.2967	0.1067	25.2708	21.75	0.2376	33.38	33.3800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	IRN	TRY	YER	QAT	ADP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7503	0.3770	3.6401	0.3036	3.6710	1.6390	3.3885
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2970	0.5324	5.1414	0.4287	5.1950	2173.73	4.7874
GB Sterling	0.2668	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0809	0.98	410.37	0.9038
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.3485	-	9.86	0.8052	0.74	4082.55	8.9813
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0834	1.01	422.79	0.9311
Kuwait Dinar	3.2844	2.3324	12.3548	1.2419	11.99	-	12.09	6070.00	0.9311
Emirate Dinar	0.2724	0.1929	1.0216	1.0216	0.0827	-	-	419.23	0.9233
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4600	2.4368	0.2449	2.3652	0.1972	2.3653	-	2.2024
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2089	1.1065	0.1112	1.0740	0.0896	1.0631	454.06	-

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GBP
Brent	18.35	18.55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WTI	19.85	20.15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bony	10.35	18.55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dubai	17.50	17.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UL Gas	194.00	194.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	IRN	TRY	YER	QAT	ADP	EGP
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4604	0.16552	0.3245	33.7988	-	-	-	-
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.4703	0.1691	0.40963	34.5304	-	-	-	-
KW Dinar	3.2944	5.6823	2.04499	4.84966	417.537	-	-	-	-
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.5048	1.64663	3.9472	336.247	-	-	-	-
CY Pound	1.9414	3.3509	1.2048	2.8564	245.955	-	-	-	-

Metal Prices									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GBP
Gold (oz's)	339.45	339.45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Silver (oz's)	4.75	4.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Platinum (oz's)	373.5	374.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AL (3 Months)	1627	1630	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CU (3 Months)	2353	2357	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zinc (3 Months)	1260	1262	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lead (3 Months)	624	625	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NI (3 Months)	7380	7380	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Main Equity Indices									
Source	Index	Value	Change	High	Low	Open	Close	Prev. Close	Vol.
New York	DOW JONES	0	0	0	0	0	0	8978.48	
New York	S&P 500	0	0	0	0	0	0	798.53	
London	FT-SE 100	4481.7	16.7	0.38	4484.8	4423.6	4445		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18814.75	239.42	1.24	19510	19187.7	19275.3		
Paris	CAC 40	2644.23	4.77	0.10	2652.26	2634.71	2639.46		
Frankfurt	DAX	3460.37	22.3	0.65	3460.37	3448.66	3438.07		

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GBP
Coffee (c/ibn)	248.75	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1409	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sugar (\$/ton)	313.5	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wheat (\$/ton)	178	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soya (c/ibn)	24.15	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tea (kg/kg)	152	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rice (\$/ton)	480	-	Spot	-	-	-	-	-	-

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GBP
US Dollar	0.7080	0.710	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GB Sterling	1.1542	1.16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE Mark	0.4103	0.4124	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CH Franc	0.4828	0.4852	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FR Franc	0.1210	0.1224	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JP Yen	0.557	0.5598	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NL Guilder	0.3647	0.3665	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT Lira	0.414	0.4161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

THE Daily Crossword															
ACROSS															
1 "Quo Vadis?" director		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13								14							15
6 Easily domesticated															
16								17							

U.S. places Jordan on 'watch list' over Intellectual Property Rights practices

By Ramzi E. Khourey
Special to the Jordan Times

The office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said that it will file trade complaints within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and Ecuador for violations of global rules on intellectual property protection bringing to 10 the number of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) related WTO cases initiated by the U.S.

The "Special 301" annual review of IPR, which is required by the U.S. trade law was issued April 30 listing IPR practices in more than 70 countries. This year, it outlines concerns over IPR practices in 46 countries, amongst them 10 trading partners of the U.S. slated for special attention as "priority watch countries" including the European Union (EU), Egypt, Russia, Greece, Turkey and India. It also placed 36 trading partners on the "watch list" including the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The report says that the Jordanian "1992 copyright law is cumbersome and falls

short of international standards in most respects" and states that in practice, the law is undermined by the "lack of effective enforcement mechanism and, as a result, piracy is rampant."

The report recognises that Jordan plans to revise its copyright law as part of its economic liberalisation programme but complains that "insufficient progress has been made."

Jordan, which has been changing its laws in order to meet WTO membership requirements and the requirements of the Jordan-European Union (EU) agreement initiated in Malta last month and which will be activated by January 1999, has to upgrade its current IPR laws and the enforcement of such laws in order to meet world standards.

"The inadequacies of the patent law, which dates from 1953, have led to a growing problem of patent infringement for pharmaceuticals which are manufactured for both domestic and export markets," The report claimed, "trademark protection is unavailable."

The report finally suggests that "absent extreme vigi-

lance by U.S. rights holders and revisions in the law are necessary to expand the definition of 'trademark' to include services and goods."

Regarding other countries in the region, the report criticises Israel for having an "inadequate copyright law which, combined with poor enforcement, has led to widespread cable and software piracy" and adds that the USA "remains concerned about continuing Israeli examination of a troubling modification to Israel's patent law."

Regarding Egypt which was placed on the "priority watch list," the report voices concern over the "lack of sufficient enforcement and the failure to impose deterrent penalties" which it claims has resulted in insignificant reduction in piracy especially in respect to video, book and software industries. Egypt has been taking important steps in improving the legal framework for the protection of copyrights in the country, yet the U.S. urges Egypt to "enact promptly a modern patent law that provides immediate patent protection for all types of products."

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Cement company to distribute JD6.6 million in cash dividends

** OF THE JD9.4 million net profit generated by the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC), the general assembly has approved distributing JD6.6 million in cash dividends to shareholders at a rate of 11 per cent. The company's gross profit amounted to JD36.9 million last year, slightly lower than the JD37 million posted in 1995. The net profit at the end of 1995 stood at JD10.5 million compared to the JD9.4 million achieved at the end of last year.

Measured at the pretax level, the company's profit amounted to JD11.32 million, JD5.14 million below the 1995 pretax profit of JD16.4 million. This drop was attributed to higher production costs as fuel and electricity prices were hiked by 11.5 per cent and 14 per cent respectively in May 1996. This increase burdened the company with JD2.5 million in extra costs, the JCFC annual report said.

The 1996 annual report indicated that other higher costs which burdened the company were a 25 per cent increase in the prices of paper bags and an increase in interest rates on bank credits. The 25 per cent rise in paper prices translated into JD2.42 million in additional costs that were borne by the JCFC.

The company's balance sheet at the end of last year showed total credits amounting to

JD55.3 million of which JD19.8 million were short-term credits due for repayment in 1997. At the end of 1995 total credits amounted to JD45 million.

Despite the lower financial results, the sales and production figures were higher as they amounted to JD109.5 million and 3.51 million tonnes respectively. The sales figure was JD52 million or five per cent higher than the sales total in 1995. The local market absorbed 2.59 million tonnes in 1996 compared to 2.68 million tonnes sold in the local market in the preceding year. Outside sales totalled 0.95 million tonnes last year, 34.3 per cent or 243,000 tonnes more than the total of exports in 1995.

Regarding production, the 3.51 million of cement output posted in 1996 was the highest ever amount during the history of the company, of the total, 1.56 million tonnes were produced from the Fuhais factories and 1.95 million from the Rashadiyah factory. The production figure was 2.9 per cent or 97,378 tonnes higher than the 1995 output.

Other financial data appearing in the annual report show total assets rising from JD187.9 million in 1995 to JD189.9 million in 1996. Current assets have also increased from JD46.5 million to JD49.5 million.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (25/04/1997 - 30/04/1997)
WEEKLY REPORT



CHANGING THE LAST 3 WEEKS	COMPANY NAME	S/P	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
258,000	253,000 ARAB BANK	11.6	1.58	24	1120	252510	255.00	259.50	251.00	259.00	-2.00	252.841	.025	5
1,590	1,770 JOR. NATIONAL BK.	0.00	0.00	79	40268	70809	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.01	1.000	.006	9
4,750	4,100 JOR. COMM. BANK	9.4	3.30	15	18850	84394	4.50	4.55	4.40	4.55	-0.05	4.477	.189	4
2,950	2,840 BANK OF JORDAN	10.5	8.00	2	370	1072	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	-	2.857	.004	2
1,020	.570 MID-EAST INV. BK.	53.1	0.00	2	900	868	.98	.97	.96	.96	-0.02	.964	.009	2
2,350	2,300 INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.4	7.14	9	3751	8777	2.39	2.39	2.33	2.33	-0.06	2.340	.034	3
4,500	4,700 THE HOUSING BK.	13.0	2.83	35	26453	128409	4.80	4.90	4.82	4.87	-0.01	4.855	.105	5
2,700	2,640 JOR. TRUST BANK	18.7	0.00	19	1273	9988	2.68	2.68	2.58	2.50	-0.07	2.636	.033	9
.830	.800 JOR. CUST. BANK	6.0	0.64	13	13000	10450	.02	.82	.80	.81	-0.01	.804	.065	3
3,500	3,500 ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	16.8	0.00	1	100	250	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50	-0.10	3.500	.001	1
3,820	3,750 JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.7	3.31	22	5790	23312	2.81	3.81	3.52	3.52	-0.29	3.681	.040	2
3,150	3,100 JOR. INV. FUND BANK	18.1	0.00	7	503	1645	3.15	3.25	3.25	3.25	-0.10	3.278	.005	4
1,130	1,040 BETH AL-MAL (KUTUBA)	8.6	14.56	14	3305	3993	1.19	1.13	1.02	1.03	-0.16	1.076	.165	4
4,990	4,990 ARAB BANKING CO.	22.8	0.00	1	2000	5480	4.55	4.74	4.74	4.74	-0.25	4.076	.020	1
1,180	1,100 PEXADLEX INV. BK.	-	0.00	42	19311	17585	1.10	1.17	1.07	1.14	-0.04	1.112	.138	4

BANKS	SECTOR			285	134408	647484	INDEX NUMBER : 191.60	CHANGE : -1.05%					
1,420	3,350 ARABIAN BANK INSUR.	9.8	8.00	1	1000	1350	1.39	1.35	1.35	-	1.350	.062	1
1,850	1,770 JOR. PRINCE INSUR.	4.9	11.56	3	279	480	1.77	1.74	1.73	- .04	1.749	.013	2

INSURANCE		SECTOR		4	1275	1830	INDEX NUMBER : 116.79		CHANGE : -0.21%						
1.580	1.650	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.7	7.10	88	122177	206750	1.58	1.70	1.57	1.59	-0.01	1.552	.015	4
8.000	8.000	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	11.8	1.38	2	3464	27728	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	-	8.000	.009	1
1.490	1.450	JORD. ELECTRICITY	8.2	8.23	2	150	207	1.45	1.38	1.28	1.38	-0.07	1.380	.045	1
7.250	7.000	VEHICLES, OWNERS FND.	7.8	4.92	1	700	4970	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	-	7.100	.117	1
4.500	4.150	ARAB TRVL. HOTELS	17.2	2.85	10	41520	180559	4.34	4.25	4.30	4.35	-0.01	4.349	.461	3
2.350	2.250	SHIPPING LINES	10.1	8.33	4	15700	27680	2.35	2.40	2.40	2.40	-0.05	2.400	.226	3
1.060	.520	HAZEL, PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	68	47255	46465	1.00	.99	.96	.96	-0.02	.983	.945	5
.900	.870	HAZEL, PORTFOLIO	12.3	6.82	6	3268	2913	.90	.90	.88	.88	-0.02	.893	.009	3
.520	.480	JORDAN INV. TRUST	24.6	0.00	5	2870	1321	.50	.49	.48	.48	-0.02	.486	.079	5
1.240	1.200	HAZ. INV. FUND	17.8	0.00	8	1500	1778	1.21	1.20	1.17	1.17	-0.04	1.183	.029	2
3.060	3.000	ARAB TRVL. INV. FND.	7.8	0.00	14	3897	12904	3.06	3.07	2.90	2.90	-0.04	3.055	.038	5
1.000	.970	SAKKA EDUCATION	-	0.00	16	21850	23109	.97	.98	.96	.96	-0.02	.966	.486	2
1.700	1.660	UNIKED CO.	7.8	6.71	15	4850	8128	1.69	1.68	1.64	1.64	-0.05	1.676	.097	9
.730	.700	UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	4	527	268	.70	.70	.70	.70	-	.698	.911	2

SERVICES	SECTOR		240	269557	551806	INDEX NUMBER : 102.03	CHANGE : -0.42%							
1,020	1,020 ATTACHEES	-	0.00	11	3600	3684	1.02	1.09	1.00	1.05	+.02	1.022	.092	1
3,500	3,500 JOR. CEMENT FACT.	25.0	2.96	95	27189	100255	3.77	2.79	3.64	2.72	-.05	3.687	.045	4
3,200	3,150 JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	8.9	3.28	6	2291	7162	3.20	3.20	3.04	3.09	-.15	3.226	.009	3
6,010	5,900 ARAB POTASH CO.	12.2	2.51	10	2850	16579	5.90	5.90	5.58	5.70	-.20	5.817	.004	4
10,250	10,100 JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	7.85	69	7542	76749	10.20	10.19	10.25	10.15	-.10	10.176	.118	4
6,680	6,250 JORDAN TRADING	7.2	5.37	2	609	8029	6.25	6.70	6.70	6.70	-0.02	6.700	.050	1
2,260	2,040 INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	-	0.00	14	2794	8329	2.04	1.96	1.78	1.78	-.26	1.873	.056	2
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	-0.01	2.260	.006	1
6,820	6,820 JOR. WOODST. MILLS	30.7	3.03	1	3650	24169	6.82	6.65	6.62	6.62	-.20	6.622	.091	2
3,800	3,640 ARAB PHARM. MFG.	10.1	9.49	27	4476	16469	2.79	3.73	3.69	3.67	-.08	3.679	.090	4
7,070	6,950 JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.52	11	16500	171115	7.01	7.15	7.00	7.10	-0.09	7.098	.460	9
2,350	2,350 JORDAN DAIRY</													

2.350	2.250 JORDAN DAIRY	7.6	10.82	1	100	326	2.25	2.26	2.26	2.26	+ .01	2.260	+ .006	1
2.060	2.060 JOL-PAPER CARDEN.	7.7	10.50	1	100	372	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	-	2.060	- .007	1
1.100	1.100 NAFIA INDUSTRIES	151.0	0.70	10	10000	19389	1.10	1.21	1.10	1.50	+ .32	1.130	+ .032	3
1.150	4.780 RAL ALDANA DR.IMP.	11.4	5.200	10007	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	- .02	4.837	- .013	2
			332	8	2050	6367	3.43	3.40	3.30	3.40	- .02	3.400	- .034	3

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 507171 / 607175
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (26/04/1997 - 30/04/1997)
WEEKLY REPORT



CHANGING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	S/P	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
1938	LOW														
.440		.390 CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	-	0.00	3	1750	718	.41	.41	.41	.41	-	.410	.053	2
.450		.440 JOR. TRADE FND.	12.0	0.00	16	18900	8325	.45	.45	.45	.45	-	.450	.440	2
.900		.900 HAZEL PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	1	250	120	.90	.91	.91	.91	-.01	.910	.011	1
.540		.400 ARAB FND. INVEST.	-	0.00	202	537738	259851	.54	.57	.46	.45	-.08	.484	5.274	5
.690		.570 DUNN INV.	106.1	0.00	35	5120	7930	.68	.68	.68	.68	-	.680	2.442	2
.620		.620 AL-SHAQYAN 75X	14.7	0.00	2	821	208	.65	.65	.65	.65	-	.659	.004	1
.820		.800 AL-DAMIRI JAR. 75X	-	0.00	23	59068	50606	.80	.80	.74	.74	-.06	.511	1.101	5
.540		.560 ARAB FND. & MFD.	-	0.00	22	16227	5318	.59	.58	.57	.57	-.01	.574	.474	3
.430		.430 ARAB EXPL. INV. TRD.	50.7	0.00	27	15650	8693	.45	.45	.43	.44	-.01	.442	.393	4
.240		.230 JOZ. INDUS. & COMM. TRD.	100.0	0.00	14	2608	7000	.40	.40	.40	.40	-	.400	1.095	1
.530		.500 HAZEL VENTURE	-	0.00	15	9975	5050	.53	.53	.50	.50	-.02	.511	.395	5
.600		.590 HAYMAN DIS. & MFGS.	-	0.00	7	9950	5877	.60	.60	.56	.56	-.04	.591	.642	3
.610		.510 MIDSTATE JARNEY, 75X	-	0.00	33	66103	22784	.61	.52	.60	.60	-.01	.360	.696	2
.770		.740 JORDAN EXPL.	-	0.00	42	33899	24997	.77	.76	.73	.73	-.04	.724	.226	5
.930		.910 ARAB EXPL. TRD.	148.4	0.00	6	6661	3265	.91	.91	.91	.91	-	.910	1.110	1
.930		.880 UNION TOBACCO 75X	-	0.00	10	5800	3608	.88	.89	.86	.89	+.01	.621	.116	4
.930		.950 BASI PHARM. 65X	-	0.00	35	80680	22765	.62	.61	.60	.60	-.02	.251	.906	5
.460		.410 TRD. INV.	29.9	0.00	25	36260	12925	.45	.43	.42	.42	-.03	.427	.432	5
.780		.770 TRD. CRANBURY	56.2	0.00	10	4608	3632	.78	.78	.78	.78	-	.780	.110	3
.430		.410 1-TECHNOL. MANUF.	-	0.00	1	1000	290	.41	.41	.42	.42	+.03	.420	.040	1
.630		.600 PEARL RAB. P. CORP.	-	0.00	9	1300	731	.60	.50	.56	.56	-.04	.563	.033	3
.740		.990 HAZEL PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	12	8800	4317	.48	.70	.68	.70	+.02	.499	.088	4
.790		.790 MID. EAST CORP.	7.7	0.00	10	3450	3753	.78	.74	.66	.66	-.12	.664	.026	3
.880		.840 ARAB EXPL. FOOD PAC.	56.2	0.00	9	4900	3600	.84	.80	.80	.80	-.04	.800	.756	1
.810		.780 HAZEL PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	298	613023	435460	.71	.75	.69	.69	-.11	.710	2.043	2



Miami Heat centre Alonzo Mourning fails to stop Orlando Magic guard Anfernee Hardaway in NBA playoff action. The Magic and Heat met in the Orlando Arena (Reuters photo).

Sonics beat Suns in OT, Magic overcome Heat

PHOENIX (R) — Gary Payton scored four of his 23 points in overtime as the Seattle SuperSonics forced a decisive fifth game in their Western Conference first-round series with a 122-115 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Thursday.

Seattle's other two all-stars — Detlef Schrempf and Shawn Kemp — both had big games to help the Sonics avoid another first-round upset. Schrempf had 26 points, including five in the extra session, and Kemp had 24 and 20 rebounds. In the fourth quarter, Kemp was 6-for-6 from the foul line.

The Sonics led by as much as 12 points in the fourth quarter, but the Suns closed

with a 19-7 burst to force overtime.

Kevin Johnson, playing what may have been the final home game of his career, had 23 points and 11 assists for Phoenix.

In Orlando, Penny Hardaway scored 41 points to again lead the undermanned Orlando Magic to a 99-91 victory over the Miami Heat that forced a decisive fifth game in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

Playing the entire game in the absence of injured starters Rony Seikaly and Horace Grant, Hardaway shot 12-of-23 from the field, 13-of-16 from the line and grabbed seven rebounds. He was just as spectacular as he

was in game three, when he scored 42 points to lead a comeback from a 20-point deficit.

"It says that we all know he's a star in this league, but he has demonstrated in the last two games that he's going to be one great superstar in this league," Orlando coach Richie Adubato said. "I gave him a break the other day, he played 47 minutes. I couldn't give him one minute today."

Derek Strong scored 15 points and Darrell Armstrong again played well with 12 points and nine rebounds for the Magic.

who were in control throughout and led by as many as 15 points in the fourth quarter.

Hardaway began hot and never really cooled off. He made 6-of-9 shots in the first quarter, including 3-of-4 three-pointers, and scored 18 points as Orlando grabbed a 27-25 lead.

The Magic took control for good in the second period with a 15-2 burst. Dennis Scott scored five points and Hardaway added four as the lead ballooned to 42-27 on a layup by Danny Schayes with 6:19 remaining.

EASTERN CONFERENCE		
Orlando	99	Miami 91
(Best-of-five series tied 2-2)		
WESTERN CONFERENCE		
Seattle	122	Phoenix 115 (OT)
(Best-of-five series tied 2-2)		

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Iverson 1996/97 Rookie of the Year

NEW YORK (R) — Following is a list of winners of the NBA Rookie of the Year award, won on Thursday by Allen Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers:

- 1952-53 Don Meineke, Fort Wayne
- 1953-54 Ray Felix, Baltimore
- 1954-55 Bob Pettit, Milwaukee
- 1955-56 Maurice Stokes, Rochester
- 1956-57 Tom Heinsohn, Boston
- 1957-58 Woody Sauldsberry, Philadelphia
- 1958-59 Elgin Baylor, Minneapolis
- 1959-60 Wilt Chamberlain, Philadelphia
- 1960-61 Oscar Robertson, Cincinnati
- 1961-62 Walt Bellamy, Chicago
- 1962-63 Terry Dischinger, Chicago
- 1963-64 Jerry Lucas, Cincinnati
- 1964-65 Willis Reed, New York
- 1965-66 Rick Barry, San Francisco
- 1966-67 Dave Bing, Detroit
- 1967-68 Earl Monroe, Baltimore
- 1968-69 Wes Unseld, Baltimore
- 1969-70 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Milwaukee
- 1970-71 (Tie) Dave Cowens, Boston
- Geoff Petrie, Portland
- 1971-72 Sidney Wicks, Portland
- 1972-73 Bob McAdoo, Buffalo
- 1973-74 Ernie DiGregorio (Buffalo)
- 1974-75 Jamaal Wilkes, Golden State
- 1975-76 Alvan Adams, Phoenix
- 1976-77 Adrian Dantley, Buffalo
- 1977-78 Walter Davis, Phoenix
- 1978-79 Phil Ford, Kansas City
- 1979-80 Larry Bird, Boston
- 1980-81 Darrell Griffith, Utah
- 1981-82 Buck Williams, New Jersey
- 1982-83 Terry Cummings, San Diego
- 1983-84 Ralph Sampson, Houston
- 1984-85 Michael Jordan, Chicago
- 1985-86 Patrick Ewing, New York
- 1986-87 Chuck Person, Indiana
- 1987-88 Mark Jackson, New York
- 1988-89 Mitch Richmond, Golden State
- 1989-90 David Robinson, San Antonio
- 1990-91 Derrick Coleman, New Jersey
- 1991-92 Larry Johnson, Charlotte
- 1992-93 Shaquille O'Neal, Orlando
- 1993-94 Chris Webber, Golden State
- 1994-95 (Tie) Grant Hill, Detroit
- Jason Kidd, Dallas
- 1995-96 Damon Stoudamire, Toronto
- 1996-97 Allen Iverson, Philadelphia

Stoute in strong Guineas Classic bid

LONDON (R) — Trainer Michael Stoute, currently dominating the international horse racing scene, mounts a powerful bid on Saturday in England's first classic of the season, the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket.

Stoute has had many good horses over the years, including Shergar who won the 1981 Epsom Derby before being kidnapped.

But victories in the Japan Cup and last month's Dubai World Cup with Singpiel following a Breeders' Cup triumph with Pilsudski lifted Stoute to new heights.

The trainer won the Guineas nine years ago with Doyoun and has a twin threat for Saturday's classic, raced over Newmarket's straight mile (1.6 km).

Entrepreneur is 4-1 second favourite on the strength of some good performances last season which clearly marked him as a potential star.

Although some see him more as a horse for the Epsom Derby distance of 12 furlongs (2.4 km), it's not hard to imagine the well-bred colt having the speed to win on Saturday under big race specialist Michael Kinane.

Stable companion Desert Story (16-1) has good place prospects in the light of his Craven Stakes success last month. Ray Cochrane takes the mount.

Guineas favourite Revogue (7-2) was beaten a head in a trial race at Newbury last month, but Revogue, the top two-year-old of 1996, needed the race and is fancied to put up a bold show for jockey

John Reid and trainer Peter Chapple-Hyam.

Shamikh (9-2) has the benefit of Frankie Dettori in the saddle and represents the Godolphin team, successful 12 months ago with Mark of Esteem.

The colt has only run once in his life, winning at Royal Ascot last June, but like all the Godolphin horses spent the British winter in the Dubai sunshine and is expected to give a good account of himself.

Hidden Meadow (7-1) won well at Newmarket last month, impressing trainer Ian Balding, while Purra has been backed from 12-1 to 10-1 in recent days.

Poteen (14-1) is rated highly by his trainer Luca Cumani but may need more time, while Zamindar (14-1), trained by Andre Fabre, does not possess quite the same credentials as recent French winners Pennekamp and Zafonic.

However, the second classic, the 1,000 Guineas, for fillies, raced over the same course and distance on Sunday, could well fall to the French in the shape of Pas de Repose, trained by Crique Head.

Head is hiding for her fourth English Guineas success and Pas de Repose, currently 7-2 favourite, holds a bright chance on the form book.

Biggest danger may be Henry Cecil's Sleepytime (4-1), a disappointment in her preparatory race at Newbury two weeks ago.

123rd Kentucky Derby starts today with smallest field

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (R) — The smallest field since 1985 will charge from the gate on Saturday for the 123rd Kentucky Derby, and the number of starters is a factor some say could put a betting favourite in the winner's circle for a change.

A favourite hasn't won the 1 1/4-mile "Run for the Roses" since Spectacular Bid rallied down the long stretch to beat a 10-horse field as the 3-5 favourite. Since then, the winner at the betting windows has been the loser on the track.

Things have gotten so tough only two favourites in that 17-year period have managed to come in second.

Horses such as Holy Bull, Chief's Crown, Hansel, Air Forbes Won and Rockhill Native have finished up the track and many blame fields of 18, 19 and 20 horses where two gates are used and the calvary charge to the first turn has ruined many chances.

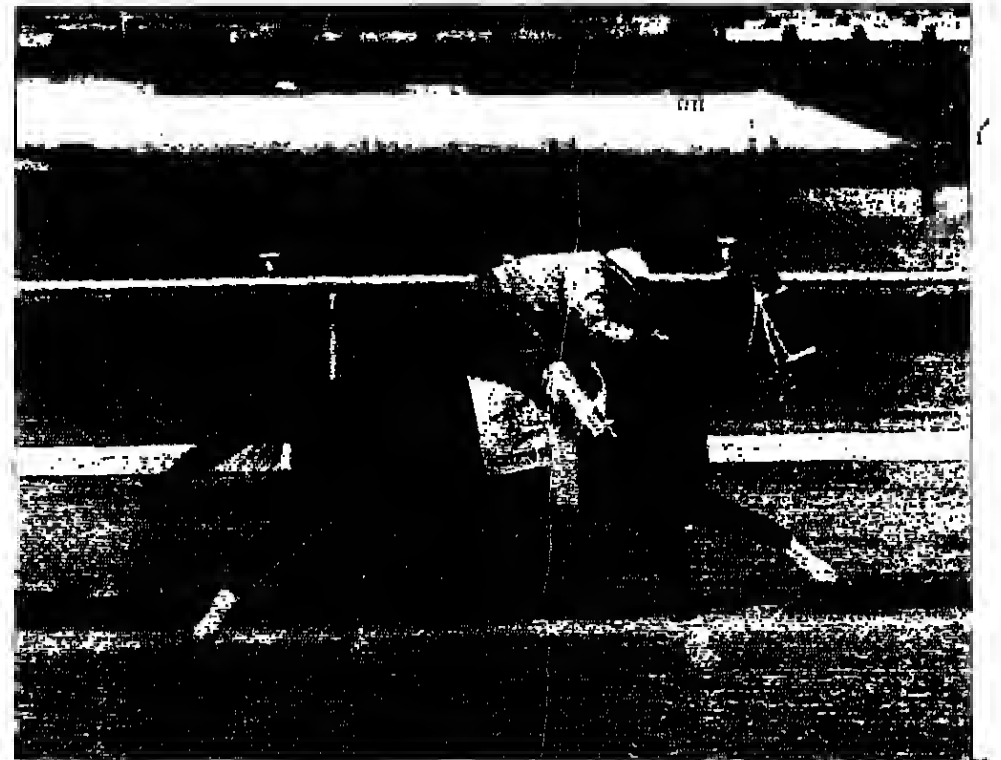
Not this year as 13 horses are set to start the race.

"Everyone's in one gate and that's a huge advantage for all of us," said Frank Brothers, trainer of Pulpit, the 2-1 early line favourite. "It's a quarter-mile run to the turn so everyone should have time to get where they want to be."

Brothers trained Hansel as the 5-2 favourite in 1991. The horse had a similar running style as Pulpit and sat in a solid position down the backstretch, then got caught in traffic and faded to 10th.

"The derby is a one shot deal," Brothers said. "There's really no way you can prepare enough. But Pulpit has all the tools to win."

The son of A.P. Indy and grandson of triple crown-winner Seattle Slew, Pulpit



Trainer Wayne Catalano takes Kentucky Derby hopeful Crypto Star around the track at Churchill Downs. The colt is preparing for the 123rd running of the Derby on Saturday (Reuters photo)

was unraced as a 2-year-old then won three straight in Florida before losing to Captain Bodgit in the Florida Derby.

The horse is owned by Kentucky dynasty Claiborne farm and will be ridden by Shane Sellers in Saturday's \$1 million race.

The odds makers think Captain Bodgit, listed at 5-2, will provide the biggest challenge for Pulpit. He has won seven of 10 and his last win came in the wood memorial in New York in the kind of sloppy conditions that could be duplicated Saturday if predicted thunderstorms materialise.

Bodgit's ownership, team valour, is about as far away from the blue-bloods of Kentucky as can be.

Team valour is a 32-member syndicate that includes a

radio talk-show host, a former member of Congress, an officer of a software company and no less than five lawyers and four retired businessmen.

He is trained by Gary Capuano, a 33-year-old member of a Maryland racing family who is based at the training facility on the faceless grounds of the defunct bowie race course. It is his first derby and he admits to being a little awed by all the attention.

The two favourites, however, won't be alone in America's most famous race. If there are no last-minute scratches, 11 others will have plenty to say about the course of the race.

The best of the rest are two California-based runners, 5-1 Silver Charm and 8-1 Free House, who have

battled each other at Santa Anita, with free house winning the last two meetings.

Concerto, also at 8-1, is owned by New York Yankees principal owner George Steinbrenner, and has won seven of his last eight, but never at the derby's grade one level.

Crypto Star, at 10-1 and the winner of the Arkansas Derby, is known for a come-from-behind style that would have been helped by the small field had he not drawn the No. 1 post position.

The rest of the field includes Phantom on Tour and Hello at 12-1, Nick Zito's entry of Shammy Davis and Jack Flash at 30-1 and Celtic Warrior, Crimson Classic and D. Wayne Lukas's late entry of deeds not words, all at 50-1.

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Glenn Close ... in
101 DALMATIANS
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15
Michael Douglas & Val Kilmer ... in
THE GHOST & THE DARKNESS
Shows: 8:30, 10:30

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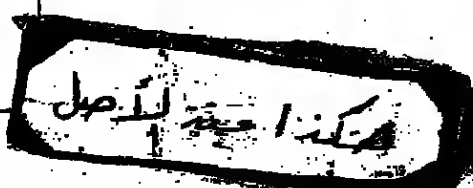
Glenn Close ... in
101 DALMATIANS
Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
Demi Moore ... in
STRIPTEASE
Show: 5:00 p.m.

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CONCORD "1"
Keanu Reeves...in
CHAIN REACTION
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CONCORD "2"
Michael Jordan...in
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McDowell leads Indians over A's

CLEVELAND (R) — Jack McDowell allowed three hits over seven innings in his return to the starting rotation and Dave Justice hit two homers to lead the Cleveland Indians to a 7-1 win over the Oakland Athletics on Thursday.

McDowell (2-2), who was just reinstated as a starter on Tuesday after pitching six scoreless innings in two relief outings, walked five and struck out nine. He was shelled in his first three starts, allowing 21 runs and 28 hits over 13 2/3 innings.

"Stuff-wise I think it was the same, but I was more consistent tonight," said McDowell. "I didn't understand what the purpose was (being sent to the bullpen). If it was to shake me up and get me back a little bit quicker, I felt I was close to breaking through anyway."

The Indians have 24 homers in their last seven games and lead the Majors with 53.

In Kansas City, Jose Rosado and two relievers combined on a four-hitter, and Jay Bell had three hits and three RBIs as the Kansas City Royals blanked the Toronto Blue Jays, 8-0, in the rubber game of a three-game series.

Rosado (2-0) allowed two singles and a triple over 7 2/3

innings, walking four and striking out five.

Toronto starter Woody Williams (0-2) was tagged for five runs and six hits in 3 1/3 innings.

At Minnesota, Scott Erickson allowed two runs over 8 1/3 innings, and B.J. Surhoff delivered a two-run single to the seventh inning as the Baltimore Orioles edged Minnesota, 3-2, to complete a three-game sweep and hand the twos their eighth straight loss.

Erickson (4-1) gave up five hits, walked none and struck out a season-high seven.

Rafael Palmeiro went 2-for-3 with two runs, extending his hitting streak to 12 games.

Baltimore, which has won five of six, owns the best record in the American League at 17-7.

In Boston, the game between the Anaheim Angels and Boston Red Sox was postponed due to rain after 4 1/2 innings with Anaheim leading, 2-0.

The game was delayed twice for a total of two hours and 12 minutes before it was called. No makeup date was announced.

Braves set record for April wins at 19

ATLANTA (R) — John Smoltz pitched eight strong innings and was aided by home runs from Michael Tucker, Javier Lopez and Ryan Klesko as the Atlanta Braves defeated the floundering Cincinnati Reds 4-2 on Thursday.

The Braves set a Major League record with 19 victories in April. The Braves are off to the best start in franchise history at 20-6.

Smoltz, who allowed five hits in eight innings, has averaged just 3.9 runs of support in his seven starts. He lowered his era to 2.66.

"I'm going after guys and they're hitting them," said Smoltz, who threw just 87 pitches. "They are not trying to go deep in the count, consequently strikeouts are down and pitch counts are down. My slider was good enough for them to just miss it."

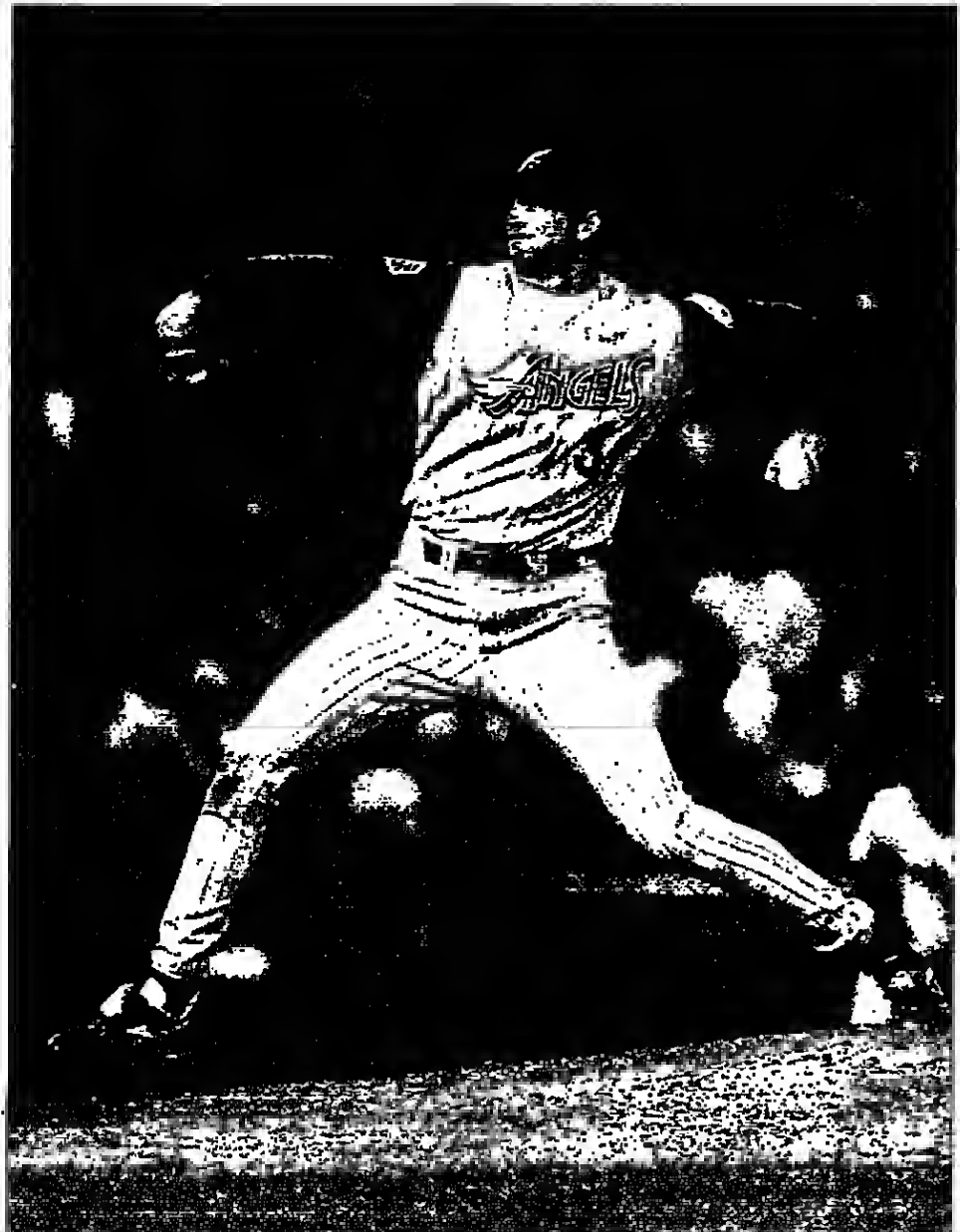
In Colorado, Bill Swift allowed a run and four hits in six innings for his third straight win and Dante Bichette hit a two-run homer to lead the Colorado Rockies to a 5-4 victory over the Chicago Cubs.

"I kept the ball down and kept them off-balance," said Swift. "I didn't have my best stuff. Fortunately I got out of there with a couple of double plays."

The Cubs had won four of their last six overall, but have lost four in a row on the road.

In Montreal, Pedro Martinez tossed a three-hitter for his fifth career shutout and Dario Fletcher homered and drove in two runs as the Montreal Expos posted a 4-0 win over the Houston Astros.

"We've been predicting for years, soon he's (Martinez) going to be one of the best in the game," said Expos manager Felipe Alou. "He's got great behavior on the mound. He's pitching hurt on a bad leg. We know that, but he's got great command of his pitches."



Anaheim Angels' pitcher Chuck Finley delivers against the Boston Red Sox in the fourth inning of play at Boston's Fenway Park. Finley was pitching a no hitter until a rain delay in the fourth inning of the game. When play briefly resumed, Finley gave up one hit to Red Sox batter Rudy Pomeroy before the game was once again halted due to rain in the fifth (Reuters photo)

Martinez struck out nine Astros and is 4-0 this season, allowing just one earned run and 15 hits over 29 1/3 innings for a 0.31 era.

In New York, Andy Ashby pitched an eight-hitter and John Flaherty homered twice as the San Diego Padres ended their eight-game losing streak with four homers and a 7-3 rout of the New York Mets.

"It was nice to see them go out there and hit," Ashby said. "I just wanted to keep it close. The defense played great."

The right-hander surrendered just four hits through seven innings before tiring. Keo Caminiti and Greg Vaughn also homered for San Diego.

In Philadelphia, Pedro Astacio pitched his first shutout in nearly two years and rookie Wilton Guerrero and Todd Zeile drove in two runs apiece as the Los Angeles Dodgers stopped the Philadelphia Phillies 5-0 for their third straight win.

Derrick May went 4-for-4 for the Phillies, who have lost four of five.

In Pittsburgh, Al Martin's RBI double in the fifth inning scored Tooy Womack with the go-ahead run and capped a three-run inning as the Pittsburgh Pirates nipped the San Francisco Giants 3-2.

Steve Cooke (2-3) allowed two runs and seven hits in 6 1/3 innings for Pittsburgh. Marc Wilkins got Glenallen Hill to hit into an inning-ending double play in the seventh and Ricardo Rincon allowed one hit over the final two innings for his first Major League save.

Barry Bonds struck out three times.

Dawoud reigns supreme at Rumman Hill Climb qualifier

By Ronfan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Drivers Open champion Ahmad Dawoud took the first and second fastest times in the Kingdom's most popular auto sports event — the Rumman Hill Climb qualifier Friday.

Dawoud came in first by clocking 2 minutes 13.69 seconds in his Ford Fiesta and second by clocking 2:20:20 in his Renault Turbo.

Othman Nashashibi came third with a time of 2:21:86 in his Porsche 911.

Based on these results Dawoud and Nashashibi reserved a ticket to the Pepsi International Rumman Hill Climb which will take place August 15.

Forty-nine Jordanian drivers including two ladies took part in Friday's event.

Competitors in the two sessions tried to break the record for the 3-kilometre-long event set by his Majesty King Hussein in 1989 in his Mercedes Benz 190 with a time of 1:57.28.

Two of Jordan's top drivers, Bashar Bustami and Ma'rouf Abu Samra, were out of the country and did not take part.

Drivers in the Rumman Hill Climb qualifier were not requested to be fully-equipped in what concerns safety measures.

However, in the international event drivers will be asked to equip their cars with safety specifications that range from having a steel cage and steel bars for protection.

Two ladies participated in this year's event: Tala Shawwa who clocked 2:37:40 in her Ford Fiesta and Nancy Majali clocked 2:44 in her Golf VW which is considered a satisfying result and now they have great hopes for the international event beside famous international drivers.

Organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) the Rumman Hill Climb takes place 17 kilometres north of Amman just off the Jarash Highway, two kilometres north of Rumman village and the results are entered in the Jordan Drivers Open Championship.

Trophies were distributed to overall fastest time, single fastest time, fastest car in the group and overall fastest time registered by a lady in a special ceremony at RACJ headquarters.

Following is the list of the best times recorded in the Rumman Hill Climb:

*Official fastest time registered by a Jordanian competitor is by His Majesty King Hussein in his Mercedes Benz 190 in 1989 with 1:57:28.

*Official fastest time by Lebanese Jean Pier Nassrallah in his Lancia Delta Integrale in 1995 with 1:56:58.

*Unofficial fastest time by Swedish Stig Blumqvist in his Ford 1:53:66.

*Fastest time by a lady is by Melia Asfour in her Nissan 240 with a time of 2:20.

Kanu set for miracle return

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan's Nwankwo Kanu, whose career looked over after undergoing heart surgery, has been cleared to play football again.

Kanu, the hero of Nigeria's victorious 1996 Olympic football side, had surgery in the United States five months ago after a pre-season medical test revealed a congenital heart disease.

But Inter, who had bought him from Ajax Amsterdam last summer, issued a statement on behalf of Ohio's Cleveland Clinic Foundation on Friday which gave the 20-year-old the all clear.

"Kanu had a very successful surgery and was able to undergo intensive rehabilitation," said Cleveland Cardiologist John R. Kramer.

"Based on the results of metabolic stress testing this week, we are removing

all limitations and allowing him to return to full normal activities, including his professional activities."

Kramer paid tribute to Kanu's adherence to the rehab programme and said: "He is stronger now physically than he was before the operation."

The Nigerian was born with a deformed aortic heart valve, which had begun to leak and affect the functioning of his heart. In November, he underwent a four-hour operation to repair the valve.

His manager Franklin Sedoc said Kanu's desire to play football again had been the source of his motivation during the four-month rehab programme, adding that he was keen to return to Inter.

Sedoc said Kanu was grateful for the support of the government and people

of Nigeria, and the support of Inter and its President Massimo Moratti.

"He is particularly thankful to God for making this possible and for giving him the faith to believe in him because with God, and if you believe in him, all things are possible."

"He also thanks his fans for their prayers and continued support. They truly helped him persevere throughout this personal ordeal."

"He now looks forward to what we hope will be a long career in professional

soccer and to a long and healthy life."

A delighted Inter paid tribute to Kanu for the "sacrifices he has made and overcome during the past few months" and expressed their deep sense of gratitude to the Cleveland clinic staff.

Inter gave no indication as to when Kanu might play for them, saying that their optimism "still had to be moderated by a sense of caution that was only logical."

JORDAN TIMES
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هاتف: (٩٦٢-٦-٩٦٧٣٢٠)
فاكس: (٩٦٢-٦-٩٦٧٩٠٥)

GOREN BRIDGE
WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HERSCH
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RUFF WITH CARE
Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A K 8 5 2
♥ Q 8 7
♦ A 8 4
♣ A 10

EAST
♠ 10
♥ Q J 10 9 7
♦ Q J 5 2
♣ A K J 7

SOUTH
♠ Q 9 8 4 3 2
♥ A 4
♦ A
♣ 10 8 5 8

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1NT Pass 8♣ Pass
4♣ Pass 6♣ Pass
6♣ Pass 6♣ Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♣
Planning the strategy is only part of a successful campaign. Attending to details is the key ingredient.
North-South bid intelligently to slam. After South made a forcing jump in spades in response to partner's spade opening bid, North-South bid four clubs to show first-round control of that suit as well as a maximum no trump in support of spades. South decided that slam probably depended on the quality of North's trump support, and the leap to five spades was intended to focus partner's attention on the trump suit. North's top spades were enough to justify contracting for 12 tricks.
West led a trump, and it was obvious that the success of the contract hinged on declarer losing only one trick in clubs. One club could be discarded on the king of diamonds. Since the only other place to park a club would be a long heart, that suit would have to break no worse than 4-2. Entries to the North hand were at a premium — the trump suit would have to serve that purpose.
Declarer won the queen of spades, cashed the king and the ace and king of hearts, then ruffed a heart. Unfortunately West overruffed, and declarer still had to lose a club for down one.
There is a better way to go about establishing the hoort, which would have protected against the possibility of an overruff. Declarer should win the first trick in hand, cash the aces of diamonds and hearts and then cross to the table with the king of trumps. Now comes the key move: Declarer must cash dummy's king of diamonds and discard a heart from hand.
Next comes a heart ruff, a trump to the ace and another heart ruff, setting up to the suit. Declarer crosses to the board with the ace of clubs, discards two clubs from hand on the king of hearts and the long heart and concedes a club. Making six odd.

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Working mum, children to move in at number 10 for the first time in history

LONDON (AFP) — Following his historic general election victory Tony Blair will introduce two firsts to the British premier's official residence Number 10 Downing Street when he moves in Friday — a working wife and children.

Mr. Blair, at 43 the youngest prime minister in almost two centuries following his landslide victory in Thursday's poll, and his barrister wife Cherie have decided to make number 10 the family home during Labour's five-year term in office.

Outgoing Premier John Major, who suffered the worst Conservative electoral rout since 1832, has chosen to use the same removal firm that Margaret Thatcher used when she left office. And in line with tradition, he will pay the removal men himself.

Insiders say, however, that number 10 may prove a tight fit for the Blair couple and their children Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11 and Kathryn, 9, especially if they employ a live-in nanny to help look after their offspring.

Given that most of Mr. Blair's predecessors have been rather higher up the age pyramid than the new tenant at number 10, children have never lived permanently at one of Britain's most famous addresses.

According to tradition Mr.

Blair will be greeted at his new home by the existing staff before being shown into the office from where he will govern Britain over the next five years.

Mrs. Blair, meanwhile, will get a chance to make a first visit to the building, whose four bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen and bathrooms were converted from servants quarters after World War II.

Mr. Blair could get round the problem by asking parliament for funds to expand number 10, but that might prove delicate in a climate of financial rigour.

He could of course turn to Gordon Brown, his friend and the man tipped to move in next door at number 11 — the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer — for living space.

In contrast to Norma Major, wife of the outgoing premier, Mrs. Blair intends to pursue her lucrative career as a top-flight lawyer, whose \$320,000 annual salary is more than three times the amount her husband will earn for running the country.

A specialist in labour law her diary over the next few weeks is already taken up with pleading a case on appeal and sitting as a junior judge, making her the first working wife of a sitting British prime minister.

Landslide victory

(Continued from page 1)

clothes. Lady Thatcher's rigorous policies included emasculating the labour unions and selling off huge state-owned enterprises, including British Airways and British Telecom.

Asked if she thought her legacy was safe with Mr. Blair, Lady Thatcher told reporters outside her London office: "I shall have something to say if it isn't."

Financial markets in London gave a great vote of confidence to Tony Blair and his new Labour party.

The FT-SE 100 index of leading shares scored a record closing high value of 4,455.6 points, which was 10.6 points higher than the previous day's close.

An equity strategist at Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull, Andy Hartwell, said: "The uncertainty is over. A Labour government is no longer a frightening prospect to the market."

In Frankfurt share prices rose by 0.65 per cent to 3,460.37 points on the Dax index to within a whisker of the record of 3,460.59 points set on March 11.

In Paris prices were firm for fourth consecutive day and the CAC 40 index gained 0.60 per cent to 2,655.31 points on expectations that the outgoing right-wing parties would win a general election in three weeks' time.

"The argument that with such a sizeable majority, Labour can pretty much do as it pleases and revert to historic 'tax and spend' type does not really stand up," British Investment Bank NatWest said.

Andrew Cates, an economist with Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) in London, said the size of Labour's majority had fuelled fears that Labour economic

policy will be more expansionary than previously thought.

"However, the size of the left-wing faction within the new government is very small, and we believe Tony Blair should find it easier, not harder, to pursue policies which he has attempted to persuade the markets are credible," Mr. Cates said.

Traditionally, the prospect of a Labour government would have created panic on the markets, but the radical shift of the once-socialist party to the centre-ground, as well as Labour's consistent opinion poll lead in the past two years, has blunted investors' fears.

Mr. Blair has adopted the Tory inflation target of 2.5 per cent or less, and promises to maintain an iron grip on public expenditure, by sticking within Conservative spending limits for the next two years.

The privatised electricity, water and gas utilities, which were waking up to the reality of Labour's windfall tax on their "excessive" profits, suffered, although investors had already accepted the likelihood of the levy.

Labour's one-off tax, expected to be introduced in a July mini-budget, will raise at least three billion pounds to pay for a training scheme for 250,000 young jobless.

Analysts pointed out that the most immediate focus was next Wednesday's monthly monetary meeting between the new Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown with Bank of England Governor Eddie George.

The market expects the incoming chancellor to increase interest rates by 0.25 percentage points. Dealers said that would gain him credibility with the market at the same time as stemming strong consumer demand.

PNA softens position

(Continued from page 1)

promised. "This is the first protest against the prime minister by people who basically are supporters of the government," said Ron Nachman, mayor of the Ariel settlement.

"There are 15,000 people living in Ariel to whom I need to give basic services like sewage and education, but the government is not coming through with the money it promised us."

Meanwhile, about 200 Palestinians demonstrated near the Jabal Abu Ghneim construction site.

Palestinian legislator

Salah Tamari urged Mr. Arafat to consider ending the peace process. "The PLO must meet and re-evaluate and decide whether to continue in this process or not. This agreement is dead, it was killed by the government of Netanyahu," he said.

"We need to fight," said a woman wearing a traditional embroidered dress and blue baseball cap emblazoned with the word "Palestine." "Otherwise by the year 2000... The Jews will take over this whole region. The Israelis may have the power, but we have the right."



New Prime Minister Tony Blair waves with his wife Cherie and their children Nicholas, on the left, Kathryn and Euan, on the right, on the steps of Number 10 Downing Street after winning a landslide election, on Friday. This is the first time in 18 years that the Labour Party has been in power and is the Conservative parties worst loss since 1832 (Reuters photo)

Ciller gives Turkish Islamist ally a breather in army row

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's ruling Islamists won breathing space on Thursday from an army assault in a struggle with the generals for the hearts and minds of the Muslim but secular nation.

Coalition ally Tansu Ciller pledged to stand by Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, and the army denied it was trying to sponsor individual secularist politicians as substitutes for the government.

Ms. Ciller, the deputy prime minister, said her True Path Party (DYP) would have nothing to do with an attempt by her fellow secularists in the opposition to form a shadow government that would unseat Mr. Erbakan.

"The DYP is not going to hide behind anyone and take part in action to topple the government," Ms. Ciller told a meeting of her parliamentarians. "For today, stability is necessary. There may be alternatives... but they cannot be a guarantee of stability."

The Turkish military is pushing Mr. Erbakan hard to curtail a rise in Islamist sentiment in what the generals see as a matter of national survival.

The army pressure has exposed cracks in the coalition. Analysts say the government is slowly collapsing but that Ms. Ciller, due to take over the government next year in a power-sharing deal, will try to stay with Mr. Erbakan for now.

"The (government's) life

expectancy is anywhere between a few days and a few months," said a Western diplomat. "A few months is probably more realistic," he said.

Ms. Ciller, also the foreign minister, was tainted by corruption charges last year which could damage her support at elections.

Her party has been weakened by the resignation of parliament members dismayed at her willingness to deal with the Islamists and is in a poor position to negotiate a government overthrow with other secularists.

The opposition, divided by mostly personal feuds, has not risen to a challenge by Mr. Erbakan this week for snap elections.

Istanbul stocks, knocked down by the political crisis, partially recovered on Thursday to close 2.94 per cent up.

The army said on Thursday it was steering clear of Turkey's turbulent party politics.

"The Turkish armed forces does not cooperate or favour any personality, political party or group," the military said in a statement carried by the state-run Anatolian news agency.

It was reacting to a story in Sabah newspaper that said the generals wanted Ms. Ciller to win a fight for the leadership of the Turkish right so she could then ward off the Islamist challenge.

Mr. Erbakan, who has lately arranged meetings with military figures in an

effort to play down reported problems, was scheduled to attend on Friday a ceremony for the air force's new 152nd fleet in the northeastern town of Merzifon.

Mr. Erbakan has so far stalled on complying with a list of 18 harsh anti-Islamist measures the army wants carried out.

His Welfare Party is particularly concerned at proposals to close Islamist high schools, which could neutralise the next generation of religious activists.

A court sentenced more than 100 members of an Islamist sect to three years in jail on Wednesday, a day after a senior general warned that the anti-Islamist campaign was a question of "life or death" for the republic.

On Thursday, a security court charged 18 Islamists with inciting people to rebellion and to kill one another in a play. No further details were available.

Turkey's army, the second-largest in NATO, has a history of interventions but the top brass are unlikely to stage a coup.

The government was targeted by May Day protesters in Istanbul at which scattered fights broke out. "Money for education, not for the gangs," marchers chanted. "Money for health, not for the gangs."

The government, particularly Ms. Ciller's conservatives, has been damaged by a scandal that erupted last year over alleged links between officials and right-

Killing women is allowed, declares Algerian militant

PARIS (R) — A member of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was quoted on Thursday as saying killing women in the struggle against Algerian authorities was "allowed by Sharia (Islamic law)."

The London-based Al Hayat newspaper, a Saudi-owned daily, quoted what it termed a leading activist of the GIA in Britain as saying in a telephone interview.

"What I know is that GIA militants kill only people who took up arms against them or killed their supporters in the region... GIA groups also kill their opponents' wives because Sharia allows killing renegades' wives."

Al Hayat identified the GIA member as Mustafa Kamil alias Abu Hamza Al Masri, an engineer, who fought alongside Muslims in Afghanistan and Bosnia conflicts.

In four days last month, about 160 people were killed in Algeria, including 93 in the worst massacre of five years of conflict.

Asked about the latest killings, Mr. Kamil was quoted as saying: "The confrontation with the GIA took place with people who were armed by the (Algerian) government as militia-men. Often the families of these militiamen were involved in confrontations."

He said that in the villages where the authorities had set up armed militias, "the GIA enters the village and applies Allah's verdict but avoids killing children and persecuted people."

Children as young as four months and many young girls were killed in the two most recent massacres in Algeria.

According to Mr. Kamil, Algerian intelligence services killed the youngsters with the aim of "deforming the GIA's image," the paper quoted him as saying.

Algeria insists its security forces operate within the law in the battle against Islamist rebels. The North African country has been locked in civil strife since the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election in which the Islamic Salvation Front had taken a huge lead. About 60,000 people have since died.

Algeria on June 5 will hold its first parliamentary elections since then, and some diplomatic sources link the increased violence to rebel attempts to disrupt them.

Poll: Half of Israelis support inquiry into Netanyahu's scandal

TEL AVIV (AP) — Half of Israelis support setting up an official commission of inquiry into the influence-peddling scandal that has rocked the government, a poll published Friday indicates.

The results came two days after Israel's parliament rejected such a step.

A Gallup poll, appearing in the Maariv daily, found that 51 per cent of the population supports forming an official commission. Forty-six per cent were against the step, and three percent were undecided. The poll had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent.

The pollsters questioned 466 Israeli Jewish adults by telephone earlier this week.

For more than a week, Israelis have been signing a petition in a tent near the parliament building, calling for the inquiry. Organisers say they have collected tens of thousands of signatures.

Opposition leaders have also called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resign.

State prosecutors decided last week not to accept police recommendations to indict Mr. Netanyahu and two of his top aides, but said there was enough evidence to charge Arieh Deri, a key coalition partner, with extortion.

The police suspect Mr. Netanyahu appointed a crony of Mr. Deri's as attorney general in January. Israel TV reported that Mr. Deri demanded the appointment in return for support from his party. Shas, on a troop withdrawal from the West Bank city of Hebron. Under the alleged deal, the attorney general would have ended Mr. Deri's ongoing trial on corruption charges.

Despite the prosecution decision that there wasn't enough evidence to indict Mr. Netanyahu, it said serious questions remained about his conduct.

In two weeks, the Supreme Court will hear 10 appeals of the decision not to indict him.

Mr. Netanyahu has said he made mistakes in the affair, but didn't commit any crime.

Jewish Ethiopians ask for recognition

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A group of Ethiopian Jews who risked torture and imprisonment in Sudan in undercover operations for the emigration of their coreligionists to Israel, has come forward to demand recognition in the Israel, a paper said Friday.

Some 50 Ethiopian Jews were recruited by the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency, and worked for much of the 1980s to set up escape routes for Ethiopian Jews, mainly through Sudan, the weekly Kol Ha'ir reported.

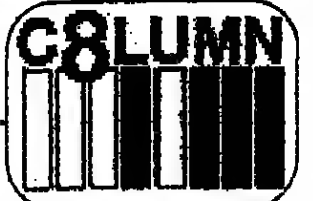
Aharon Taichu, now a youth worker in the north Israeli town of Kiryat Yam, began leading the first secret channel in 1980 when he was 28 and helped thousands escape over the following four years.

An English teacher in his home country, he smuggled fellow Jews either to the coast, where they were met by Israeli ships, or to the Sudanese desert where they were picked up by Israeli Hercules helicopters. "I was arrested and tortured half a dozen times by the Sudanese army. I finally had to flee because the escape route was discovered," he told Kol Ha'ir.

Another agent, Eyal Aharon, was 17 years old when he and three colleagues set up a second route in 1984. They too smuggled over thousands of Ethiopians before being arrested and tortured by Sudan in 1989. He escaped to Israel in 1990.

"They are ungrateful. No one thanked us or gave us medals or more importantly provided us with any rewards," said Mr. Aharon, who now works as a construction worker in the south Israeli city of Ashkelon.

The mission heroes have now turned to a team of lawyers in an attempt to win recognition as former Mossad agents and receive pensions. More than 60,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel, most of whom came to Israel in major army airlifts in 1985 and 1991.



Unfaithful sandwich man owns up in public

LONDON (AFP) — A wronged wife forced her adulterous husband to parade through the streets of their home town wearing placards, owning up to his infidelities, the Daily Telegraph reported.

Thursday. Sandwich man Robert Hill, 30, wore boards which proclaimed on one side "I have been unfaithful to my wife (at least eight times)," and on the other: "I am sorry darling." The very public humiliation was the condition his wife laid down to forgive him. A sheepish Hill said: "It was embarrassing, but not as bad as I thought it would be. I got a lot of response. Some were shaking their heads and saying 'Who's been a naughty boy then?'" His wife explained: "I just had to teach him a lesson he will never forget. He made me look stupid, so I thought I'd make him look stupid." The couple, who have three children, live in Alfreton, Derbyshire.

Bjoern Borg returns to the courts... to watch son

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedish tennis legend Bjoern Borg has returned to the tennis courts in Sweden, not to play but to watch his 11-year old son Robin compete in his first tennis tournament, Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter reported Friday. Robin Borg, who plays for the KLT tennis club in Stockholm, was closely watched by the Swedish press, eager to see if he had inherited his father's talent. But Robin, who says he plays his "own game," lost a disappointing 6-1, 6-1 Thursday to 12-year old Niklas Persson. "I remember I lost 6-0, 6-0 in my first tournament," Bjoern Borg recalled after the match. Noting the pressure on Robin, the 40-year old five-time Wimbledon champ and six-time French Open winner said he preferred to keep a low profile in his son's tennis career. "I'll gladly help him with his tennis, but I prefer to stay in the background. I think it's better that he has people helping him other than me," he said.

Beat poet bookstore opens in Italy

FLORENCE (AP) — A City Lights bookstore opened in Italy Thursday with a tribute to the late beat poet Allen Ginsburg from his friend, publisher and fellow poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The ANSA news agency said Ferlinghetti gave a reading of his poetry to a standing-room-only audience. The reading was dedicated to Ginsburg, who died April 20 at the age of 70. Ferlinghetti's city lights books published Ginsburg's pivotal poem "Howl" in 1956. ANSA said Ferlinghetti also opened an exhibition of photographs of Ginsburg in Italy on Thursday.

Rick Parfitt of Status Quo has heart operation, tour cancelled

LONDON (AFP) — The lead guitarist of the veteran British rock group Status Quo, Rick Parfitt, has had emergency heart surgery and the band's upcoming tour of Britain and Europe over the next three months has been cancelled, a spokesman for the band said Thursday. The 48-year-old rocker underwent a quadruple heart bypass after being rushed to hospital on Wednesday night complaining of chest pain. "He wasn't given a choice about having the operation. The surgeons told him he had to do it and do it now because a heart attack was imminent. It was terrifying," the spokesman said, adding that the operation lasted around four hours and went well.